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ABSTRACT

The presence of young people in public spaces and the types of activities in which they engage have generated considerable debate and discussion in Australia in recent years. This guide provides brief descriptions of a range of public space projects that have been undertaken in Australia. The aim is to outline the key elements of a youth-friendly public space strategy and then describe the basic features of the various grassroots initiatives and specific community-based projects, many of which developed in urban areas. Public space project sites include commercial areas such as shopping centers, publicly owned community spaces, multifunctional spaces such as schools, and outdoor spaces. Part 1 of the guide provides a broad strategic framework for program development that is based on a social development approach to the needs of young people. Part 2 describes eight types of public space projects and initiatives. (Contains 29 references.) (SLD)

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Public Spaces for young people

A Guide to Creative Projects and Positive Strategies

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By Rob White

A publication of the
Australian Youth Foundation
in partnership with the
National Campaign Against Violence and Crime

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August 1998

Dr Rob White

Dr Rob White, an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Melbourne, has been actively involved in the area of youth studies for a number of years. He is the author and editor of several books on young people and has written extensively on issues such as young people and public space, ethnic minority youth, juvenile justice, youth unemployment and police–youth relations.

The Australian Youth Foundation

The Australian Youth Foundation (AYF) is an independent organisation established in 1989 to assist young Australians who are socially, financially, physically or intellectually disadvantaged to reach their full potential.

The AYF is a significant supporter and publisher of social and economic research. It supports innovative projects which are a catalyst for social change through serving as models for other youth based organisations throughout the world. It has played a leading role in developing programs and projects throughout the country focussing on the issue of social belonging.

National Campaign Against Violence and Crime

The National Campaign Against Violence and Crime is a strategic Commonwealth Government initiative to develop, implement and promote programs, policies and projects that prevent violence and crime.

This approach involves partnerships with a range of stakeholders whose activities may impact on crime, including Commonwealth agencies, State and Territory Governments, local governments, non government organisations, academic institutions, community groups and the business sector.

The NCAVAC Unit is located in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

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Finally, thanks are due to the Australian Youth Foundation for funding various public space initiatives, and for providing the resources to co-produce and distribute publications such as the current Guide. The AYF has an impressive record of positive intervention on youth-related issues, and plays a vital role in instigating meaningful projects and reform at the grassroots level.

Rob White

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Introduction

The presence of young people in public places, and the types of activities and behaviour in which they engage, has generated considerable debate and discussion in Australia in recent years. In many cases, the public visibility of young people has been accompanied by negative reactions on the part of shopkeepers, older people and politicians, particularly in regard to perceived misuses and anti-social behaviour on the part of young people in such spaces. Conversely, young people have complained of undue interference in their affairs, and unfair treatment by authority figures, especially in instances where they have not broken any laws or committed a crime.

Experience has shown that very often the best approach to youth-related issues is one which is holistic, community-based and which involves young people directly in the process. Accordingly, if there are conflicts over how public space is used, experienced and regulated, then attention should be given to those measures which attempt to deal with the issues in a creative and positive manner. This is the intention of the present book.

The Guide provides brief descriptions of a wide range of public space projects which have been undertaken across Australia in recent years. The aim of the book is to provide an outline of the key

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elements of a broad youth-friendly public space strategy, and then to describe the basic features of various grassroots initiatives and specific community-based projects.

A wide range of interventions on public space issues is described in the Guide. There are a number of different sites where public space initiatives can take place. Some of these include:

Existing Commercial Sites (e.g., shopping centres)
New Commercial Developments (e.g., shopping complexes)
Publicly-Owned Communal Spaces (e.g., local council areas)
Multi-Functional Spaces (e.g., high schools)
Outdoor Spaces (e.g., council reserves and parks)

There are also different points of intervention or different orientations to public space issues. Some of these include:

Planning Processes (e.g., design and planning)
Working with Management (e.g., shopping centres, local councils)
Youth Arts (e.g., cultural events, graffiti programmes)
Special Projects (e.g., public consultations)
Integrated Planning (e.g., multi-agency collaboration, guidelines and regulation)

This Guide focuses on projects which have involved special funding or specific authority approval for particular project purposes, mainly involving community groups, and community development sections of local councils. It also considers projects relating to planning processes and shopping centre management strategies, which involve both private commercial interests, and public bodies such as local councils and state government departments.

The specific measures described in this Guide are in many instances transferable to localities other than those within which they have been developed. This is recognised in the discussions contained in the first four sections of the Guide. The intention of Part I of the Guide is to provide a broad **strategic framework** which outlines the key principles and directions for work in this area. Combined with the concrete examples of good practice in the second part of the Guide, it is hoped that the framework provided herein will assist others in developing forms of intervention and prevention strategies on public space issues appropriate to their own local community needs.

Part II of the Guide describes eight types of public space projects and initiatives. These include:

- those which **involve consultations** on public space issues
- those which aim to make **creative use of existing public spaces**
- those which use **art and theatre** in raising the public profile of public space issues
- those which deal with **management issues** relating to commercial sites such as shopping centres
- those which involve planning processes pertaining to **new development projects**
- those involving local council approaches to **integrated planning**, which incorporate the views and needs of young people
- those which involve **state-wide initiatives** oriented toward providing resources and models of 'good practice' for local councils.

those which involve **national initiatives** in the form of funding strategies, occasional publications, research reports and regular newsletters.

The information contained in this Guide comes directly from the projects in question, or from descriptions provided in general literature. An attempt was made to include mention of all major projects from around the country, drawing upon community contacts and published materials in order to do so. In most cases, the projects referred to were undertaken in 1996–1997, and many of them are now no longer in operation due to lack of funding or because they have achieved their immediate project goals.

Many of the agencies and organisations mentioned in this Guide have a history of involvement in the areas of youth service provision, crime prevention, youth advocacy or youth project development. It needs to be acknowledged that, generally speaking, the projects discussed in this Guide were or are a reflection of ongoing commitments by local councils and community organisations to youth matters, rather than simply one-off interventions.

The nature of documentation, including assessment of each project's processes and outcomes, varied considerably. In most cases, the discussion is informed by direct contact with a project team or a major publication describing the project. The less extensive descriptions are based on information already provided in general overview documents (such as the recent Darwin, Brisbane and New South Wales studies). A listing of relevant documents (including the overview studies) is provided at the end of the Guide.

The discussions should be treated as indicative of broad project development, rather than as an evaluative exercise. In Part II, the structure of each project description for the first three sections is based upon the fact that many of the project documents provided explicit information on such things as 'methods and strategies' and 'outcomes', and this seemed an appropriate way to provide a reasonably uniform presentation. Comments on strengths and limitations are based upon general observations and are not intended to detract from the specific achievements and positive benefits of each project, especially given the limited time, resources and people-power available to most of the projects.

The next five sections of Part II are organised somewhat differently. Due to the variation in reporting methods and documentation, these sections concentrate on providing descriptions of the materials and strategies, rather than more structured consideration of objectives, methods and outcomes. The extent to which each project or strategy is described was circumscribed by the materials available at the time of writing.

In some instances, the projects were multi-dimensional, involving, for example, aspects of consultation, research, creative use of public space, management strategies, and art and drama. Where this was the case, a specific aspect of the project was focussed on in order to highlight its particular innovative qualities or strengths. This is reflected in its subsequent location within the Guide (i.e., the section within which it is placed, such as 'research and consultation').

A Strategic Framework

This part of the Guide outlines a **strategic perspective** as this relates to young people's use of public space. The issues pertaining to young people's use of public space are diverse, complex and in many cases tied to particular local conditions, particular categories of young people and specific situational problems. Accordingly, the following discussion does not attempt to prescribe in detail any one project or programme structure. Rather, the aim is to establish the broad parameters within which specific initiatives might be developed.

From examination of various reports and case studies relating to the specific issue of young people and public space, it would appear that the following elements are important components of a successful youth crime prevention framework:

- the adoption of a broad **social development** approach, which incorporates measures designed to enhance the opportunities of young people and which allow them to take part in the negotiations and decisions that affect them and others around them
- the creation of a **constellation of programmes and activities**, to cater to a wide variety of interests, needs and

situations, and which include programmes which are well targeted at specific problems

the importance of **`community ownership`** which takes into account local conditions and which allows the direct and active involvement of local young people and other members of the community

the necessity of adopting a **`holistic approach`** to youth issues, which recognises the intersection of family, school, employment, recreation and other issues in creating 'risk' situations

the importance of **`multi-agency involvement`**, including the involvement of young people, so that a wide range of skills, knowledge and resources can be drawn upon in addressing complex problems

the necessity of **`research and auditing processes`** in order to determine levels and types of need, sources of conflict and potential avenues for action

the importance of **`evaluation`** of existing projects and programmes, and the need for greater information about the effectiveness of different kinds of interventions

the necessity of being **`flexible in approach`** so that programmes can be changed or modified as required, and through on-going evaluation, better targeting and better outcomes can be achieved.

Bearing this framework in mind, the task is to apply these observations and principles to the specific issues at hand.

1. Youth Needs and Rights

Human rights are rights which are meant to obtain regardless of the behaviour of particular individuals and whether or not they are acting responsibly. That is, these rights refer to the *conduct of institutions*, in the sense that, while some limitations of rights may be warranted or legally justified in the case of specific transgressions of state laws by individuals (e.g., young offenders), institutions must not take away these rights from whole classes of people (e.g., young people as a whole). More positively, governments are obliged to uphold certain rights which have been deemed to be universal—that is, applicable to everyone simply by virtue of their status as human beings.

While the principle of respect for the rights of young people, and the recognition of youth needs in relation to public spaces, provide the strategic base for improving existing relationships, these need to be translated into concrete measures at a practical level. General prescriptions in this area include:

- provision of a **diverse range of options** for young people—this means that young people need to be provided with facilities and spaces which are multi-functional or which offer a range of uses, and which do not become the exclusive domain of any one group of young people (e.g., skateboard ramps tend to have limited, but nevertheless important, appeal to a small proportion of young people)
- provision of **youth outreach services**—this means that young people can connect with youth advocates, adult mentors and service providers where they are located, rather than having to come in to specific fixed locations, and that assistance in the form of welfare, counselling, health and legal support as well as

someone to mediate between groups of young people, and young people and authority figures is available

provision of **youth-oriented public transport services**—this means ensuring that public transportation is available and matches the entertainment needs of young people, as in the case of cinema end-times, that special services be available for weekend late night travel or special events (e.g., concerts or sports carnivals), and that public transport personnel are adequately prepared to deal with, and are respectful of, young users of public transportation

provision of spaces and facilities which take into account the **social differences between young people** andwhich thereby offer flexible usage—this means that smaller publicly visible spaces and larger sized spaces can be combined to provide different groups (e.g., young women and young men) places within which they can feel comfortable and safe, yet still part of a general congregation of people; or that different age groups be provided with specific types of amenities in line with their particular interests (e.g., games parlours, café-style shops)

the need to adopt a **range of communication strategies** to cater to the needs of different groups of young people—this means varying the methods of consultation and information provision to suit the distinctive style of any particular groups (e.g., language, single-sex groups, use of youth advocates, links to wider community and family networks)

the guaranteeing of safe, **confidential methods of consultation**—this means that certain issues (e.g., relating to illegal drugs) and conflicts (e.g., relating to racism or sexual harassment) which have a big impact upon how public spaces are used, must be able to be conveyed and discussed in ways which allow for voices which otherwise may be silenced to be heard

allowing for both **formal and informal means of participation and inclusion**—this means representation on management committees, setting up of 'youth councils' or similar types of participatory bodies (as part of local councils, local youth services, or site management committees), as well as ongoing grassroots consultation (through forums, use of advocates, surveys, etc.) with young people who may not wish to become so active, who may not feel able to articulate their ideas, or who may be prevented for social and economic reasons for participating in more structured bodies

the **development of competencies** in young people so as to ensure better use of resources and facilities—this means that in some cases young people need to be shown how to use facilities, or to learn certain skills, in order to maximise their use of and interest in what is on offer (e.g., sports, computers)

development of **clear guidelines and codes of conduct involving young people** themselves—this means that young people participate directly in establishing boundaries of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, in particular kinds of public spaces as appropriate (e.g., shopping centres, city skating zones), and that there be effective and fair application of rules, and defined avenues of appeal when rules have apparently been breached

provision of some spaces for the **exclusive use** of certain groups of young people—this means that some young people, such as young women, indigenous young people and ethnic minority young people, have access to spaces, perhaps at designated times, on an exclusive basis in order to reflect their specific needs and interests, as well as safety concerns

undertaking of **proactive campaigns** which attempt to break down social stereotypes and barriers which may be limiting or oppressive of certain groups of young people—this means the carrying out of activities such as youth reconciliation projects for young people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to foster better relationships between different groups of young people who use public space.

The development of specific projects or programmes needs to take into account these kinds of concerns, especially given the common problems faced by many young people. However, there are particular groups and particular issues which warrant separate and further attention. This is most evident in the case of young women, ethnic minority young people, and indigenous young people. Here the key problems tend to revolve around two major issues which, while alluded to above, deserve further attention.

First, there is the issue of whether to construct some spaces as **exclusive to certain groups**, given their particular needs and histories, or whether to attempt to integrate each group into the mainstream of public space life. The answer is that it is possible to do both, particularly if there mixed opinions among the young people themselves as to what they prefer.

For example, it is important to ensure that consultation processes be as inclusive as possible, and public space areas and activities as diverse as possible, in order to cater to multiple uses and groups.

Simultaneously, it may be appropriate to set aside certain spaces for the use of particular groups (e.g., women-only rooms in a drop-in centre, indigenous cultural centres, ethnic minority meeting places) and/or certain times for the use of some facilities or amenities (e.g., swimming pool hours for exclusive use of some young people, which might, for example, fit the cultural and safety requirements of some women). Building a skateboard ramp is rarely seen in terms of social exclusivity; nor should providing separate spaces for other groups.

Secondly, although it is important to meet the needs of particular 'special population' groups such as young women or indigenous people, it is equally important to engage in **proactive campaigns** which attempt to break down the social prejudices which may fuel conflicts between different groups of young people.

The marginalised position of indigenous people in Australia, for example, is in many cases compounded by deeply ingrained and widely shared negative stereotypes. There are many instances of racist attitudes and behaviour being directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—not only by authority figures such as the police and security guards, but by other young people, their parents and members of their wider community. The 'youth reconciliation' project currently being undertaken in Adelaide provides one example of what such a proactive campaign might look like. In this instance, the project was devised to overcome some of the problems relating to tensions between different ethnic/racial groups in the inner city, and to counter racist attacks on particular groups (especially 'Asians' and indigenous people). The aim of the project is to promote better relations between young people of diverse cultural backgrounds, by applying concepts of reconciliation and anti-racism. Similar attempts to challenge racism and cultural misunderstandings, in Melbourne and Brisbane, have used performance drama as the medium for the message.

The place of indigenous young people in society generally, and in relation to the criminal justice system, deserves special mention. Public space issues in this case are heavily overlaid by problems stemming from colonialism and invasion. While the matter of separate spaces should not be seen in terms of an either/or proposition (as discussed above), the regulation of public space is a slightly different issue. Given the historical relationship between the police and indigenous young people, and given the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody on the importance of self-determination in indigenous affairs, it seems reasonable that special protocols continue to be developed, and resourced, in relation to public space strategies for indigenous young people. In particular, the use of indigenous police officers, advocates, community justice panel members, night and youth patrols, and other appropriate people in devising ways to both diffuse problems before they arise, and to solve them when they do, is essential. Fundamentally, any implementation of specific strategies should be undertaken with full regard to the importance of community decision-making input into the process.

2. Planning and Development Strategies

Public space planning issues are ultimately community issues. Certainly how suburbs are planned and designed have major implications for the quality of life for all residents, not just young people. Not only does greater attention need to be paid to physical infrastructure, in the form of recreational, entertainment and commercial facilities, but also consideration must be given to the social needs and desires of people living in particular localities. This essentially means that planners, designers and architects have to talk to, and with, members of the community, including young people.

Local councils can certainly play a useful and key co-ordinating role in this process. Particular measures which facilitate consultation could include:

- the development of a **youth policy** in local government strategic plans, and in the broad operational framework of private sector planning, design and architecture companies
- the incorporation of youth concerns into **urban planning regulations**, through social impact assessments, and into local government procedures relating to things such as development applications
- the employment of **youth advocates** by local government, located in the relevant community development and human services sections, accompanied by the registering of relevant youth advocacy bodies and relevant youth services
- consideration of a wide **variety of consultation techniques and mechanisms**, to suit the particular objectives of each organisation, that are appropriate to the type of project

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- being undertaken and the young people most likely to be affected
- clarification of the **decision-making process, timelines and accountability structures** as part of the consultation process
- the **public documentation** of consultation processes, and provision of time for feedback on any preliminary findings

The consultation process needs to lead somewhere. However, the end result will not necessarily rely solely on what young people have to say or contribute. It needs to be acknowledged from the outset that professionals working in the area have expertise, and that this expertise has to be used in conjunction with, but not to the exclusion of, popular input into the planning process. Communication of expert ideas and opinion to a lay audience can in fact be an important part of the overall consultation process. For example, there are a number of planning and design principles which have already been developed and which have immediate relevance to the planning of safe youth public spaces.

3. Managing Public Space

How public space is managed plays a big part in constructing the social climate in which young people and others interrelate, and whether or not conflicts and tensions will predominate in any particular locality. A negative regulatory environment can make young people feel unwelcome, and frustrated at what they perceive to be unfair and unjust policies and policing practices. A positive approach, on the other hand, is one which respects the views and rights of young people, and that invites young people to be part of the solution.

From the case studies and literature on public space management, it is possible to discern a number of measures which would enhance the relationship between authority figures and young people. These include:

- taking the time to **communicate directly with young people**, and in particular listening carefully and being non-judgemental about what they have to say, and explaining the rules or code of conduct expected in a particular place
- establishing some kind of **connection with young people**, through simply being a friendly presence in their lives, through to developing more formal institutional links with youth services and youth committees or youth councils
- adopting an **attitude of conciliation** in dealing with young people, so that each contact is as positive as possible, rather than based upon suspicion and threat
- dealing with rule-breaking or offensive behaviour immediately and fairly (the behaviour is the problem), and with **due respect for the dignity and rights of the young person** (the young person is not)

- **co-operating with other agencies and personnel**, so that advice and referrals are close at hand, and appropriate measures can be taken depending upon circumstances
- adoption of a **problem-solving approach**, such that the underlying issues of particular cases, or particular patterns of conflict, can be dealt with rather than simply the symptoms
- a willingness to be held **accountable**, both through regular surveys of local young people on performance and conduct, and with regard to suitable mechanism in which complaints can be registered and dealt with as a means to improve future performance
- active **incorporation and recruitment of indigenous people, women and ethnic minority people** into particular services, accompanied by genuine commitment to multicultural service provision
- support for and co-operation with youth-oriented, community-based **night patrols** which may be created to deal with specific groups of young people (e.g., indigenous young people), or specific types of behaviour (e.g., substance abuse)
- undertaking of **specialised training** which might include information about youth issues, skills such as interpersonal communication, and learning about alternative dispute resolution techniques
- development of **specific protocols** regarding how best to deal with young people under certain circumstances, involving young people's direct participation and which might include a code of conduct for authority figures and young people alike

For police and security guards, professionalism should be seen in terms of the capacity to think creatively and laterally about problems, and to be multi-skilled across a range of task areas. Management of sites should be evaluated in terms of community relationships, rather than tasks accomplished. The adoption of cross-cultural sensitivity training and anti-racist education as key elements of pre-service and in-service professional development rates a high priority in this regard. This kind of training is particularly important given the cultural differences in how different ethnic and indigenous groups use and experience public space.

In operational terms, while many police services have 'youth policies' which spell out broad guidelines, and some security firms are developing similar guidelines, there is a need to develop detailed, but flexible, protocols at a local level, which best reflect the feelings of young people and the resources available. As mentioned above, a protocol could include a code of conduct, for authority figures and young people alike, as well as procedures to be used in the event of conflict or a breach of the rules (by either party).

4. Evaluation

The success or otherwise of any particular strategy or specific project cannot be taken for granted. There is a need to know concretely whether or not something is in fact making a positive difference. The criteria for success cannot be assumed either. For example, learning from mistakes is often a valuable experience in its own right, and is a normal part of developing the skills and methods which will enable better work in the future.

Ongoing evaluation provides a benchmark for how a strategy is working, and what may need to be done to improve its chances of success. A useful summary of evaluation techniques in this regard is provided by a recent Australian Youth Foundation *S.T.A.R.T. Do It Yourself Evaluation Manual* designed for use by agencies involved in youth-related projects. One of the centrepieces of the methods outlined in this is the use of SWOT analysis. An indication of what this entails is provided in the accompanying table.

SWOT Analysis Evaluation Method

		Positive	Negative
• available resources, including budget • structure • culture, values and mission • staff skills and morale	Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
• political environment, policies • economic factors • social and community issues • technical factors such as new ideas • external stakeholders of project	External	Opportunities	Threats

Source: adapted from AYF & Sharp, 1996, pp. 16–17.

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A SWOT analysis helps to provide a realistic picture of the internal and external environments which impact upon programme and project development. It can provide a snapshot of current trends and responses, and is useful as a continuing means to measure both support and resistance to particular approaches and projects.

Strategic planning is really about being clear about what you are trying to do, who precisely is doing what, and how you plan to go about doing it. It means identifying who the target groups are, and what the priority needs are. A three-tiered planning process might include:

- setting out specific **aims** of the programme or project
- identifying the intended outcomes of the programme or project, through clearly set out **goals and objectives** (for which groups as well: the project team as well as the intended target group)
- providing specific information about how each goal is to be achieved: identifying the **strategy** to be adopted; the type of **activity** to be engaged in; the **timeline**; and the **performance measure**.

Project development depends upon good research and evaluation practices. The use of techniques such as those described above are essential tools in determining **outcomes**.

Evaluation is not only about outcomes however. Given the strategic framework outlined at the beginning of this section, it is important

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to evaluate **processes** as well. Key questions which might be asked with respect to this include such things as:

the type and extent of **youth participation** in an initiative, and the extent to which young people are provided with resources that maximise their participation

the exercise of **decision-making** power by different parties, who gets the final say, and what kinds of avenues are open for community and professional input into projects

where and to whom the basic **accountability** for project development and outcomes ultimately lies

the mechanisms in place to ensure adequate **documentation** of project development, and provision of information and feedback channels to key stakeholders

distinguishing between **multi-agency co-operation** (e.g., dialogue between parties) and **strategic partnerships** (e.g., formalised relationships which involve group decision-making and adherence to decisions by the group as a whole)

consideration of how intentional effects from programme implementation may lead to particular **unintended consequences** and how these might be avoided, and the ability to deal with unforeseen circumstances if they do arise the ways in which original stated aims (e.g., reducing youth crime) can be **modified or changed** as a result of project research and development (e.g., enhancing community solidarity).

The measurement of programme or project outcomes needs to take into account performance indicators internal to the initiative (e.g., incidents of vandalism) and effects which may not have been intended for measurement as part of a project brief (e.g., other forms of community cohesion or conflict as a result of the initiative). Performance indicators should be seen as useful tools to guide processes and thinking about issues. They are the benchmarks for 'good practice'.

Projects & Initiatives

1. Research & Consultation

1.1 Tasmania: Youth Spaces Consultation Project [Launceston City Council]

Rationale and Aims

The Youth Spaces project was commissioned by the Launceston City Council and the Northern Youth Coordinating Committee from funding received from the Australian Youth Foundation.

The need for the project arose out of local concern that, due to a lack of affordable, accessible, alcohol-free venues for recreation and entertainment, and due to community attitudes that have tended to generalise and stigmatise young people in a negative manner, Launceston's young people have felt increasingly alienated and isolated from their community.

Methods and Strategies:

To address these issues the project implemented strategies designed to improve young people's relationship with the community, involving them in the negotiation with Council for some youth specific public spaces and consulting with them as to their recreational needs and concerns.

The project investigated the following questions:

- the relationship of young people to community space
- how best to consult with and involve young people in the social and civic functions of their community
- how to resolve tensions, real and perceived between young people's use of public space and other interests.

The project approach was by way of consultation. Over 700 people in the Launceston area were consulted in a four month period from February to June 1997. A literature review of young people and public space issues was also undertaken.

The choice of models for consultation was influenced by a desire to provide both conventional statistical and general information, as well as documentation on ideas, opinions and information gathered through more informal, creative and direct processes. Consultation occurred via a survey/questionnaire, four community forums that each had a specific focus, video technology and through data gathering on the streets.

The primary consultation methods included:

i. Forums/Workshop Model

This provided the opportunity for young people and other members of the community to come together to share concerns and identify needs in relation to young people's uses of public spaces, recreation and entertainment provision; as well as to identify possible solutions and compromises for identified areas of contention.

Forums held included: Community (open); Schools (via elected school representatives); Mall (youth only); Skaters (open).

The strengths of the forums were:

- easy to set up and implement
- provides specific groups with the opportunity to express their views
- may demonstrate to people, particularly young people, that they are being heard and taken seriously

The limitations of the forums were:

- channels of communication to student representatives can be obstructed by school administrative procedures
- analysis of results can be messy and time consuming.

ii. Survey/Questionnaire Model

This provided an avenue to gain both statistical and general information through the use of a varied number and format of questions.

The survey was designed to be user-friendly; was piloted to ensure clarity and reliability; was distributed to a broad cross-section of young people; and was distributed on a face-to-face basis in order to ensure detailed, accurate information.

The strengths of the survey were:

can be conducted by young people amongst their peers

involves large numbers

may be a credible public relations exercise

can provide credibility to funding submissions

enables specific and objective analysis of results

The limitations of the survey were:

a survey which requires a written response may disadvantage those with a low level of literacy

answers may be shallow and without detail

the questionnaire format may limit the types of possible response

the survey format will limit the issues that are addressed

collation and interpretation may be time consuming.

iii. The 'Out and About and on the Streets' Model

This model allows contact with a broad cross-section of young people in a wide variety of environments, and involves setting up stalls in a variety of locations.

The strengths of this model were:

provides a means of face-to-face direct and immediate consultation

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it is a voluntary, informal and personal process which is easily implemented

it is flexible and provides an outlet for the dissemination of information about the project

creates a high profile for the organisations involved.

The limitations of this model were:

uncontrollable in terms of the weather

people may not approach workers

need to have good advertising and attractive banners.

iv. Youth Video Consultation

Originally it was planned to interview young people on camera, but due to the extensive nature of the consultations, this was felt to be unnecessary. However, throughout all consultations the video camera was used to record the interactions. Several hours of footage were edited into a 15 minute video.

The strengths of using video technology were:

flexible and easy way of gathering information

appealing and current method of consultation with young people

responses tend to be detailed, accurate and informative

The limitations of using video technology were:

dependency on expensive resources such as video cameras, monitors and tapes

excludes those who are camera shy

some responses may be minimal and/or flippant.

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Outcomes:

The consultations revealed that due to a lack of resources and negative community attitudes many young people have felt increasingly alienated and isolated from their community.

The consultation also found that the extension of schooling and the demise of full-time employment opportunities have had the impact of making peer interaction a central feature of young people's lives and for an increasing period of time.

It was found that inadequate transport, and little or no money for leisure activities meant that young people have a need for spaces and places of their own in which they can establish and maintain relationships with each other and as affordable places to spend time out of school and home.

The project demonstrated that when young people are viewed as legitimate members of the community and are actively involved in planning and decision-making processes, it is possible to build better relationships between young people and other sectors of the community.

Four recommendations were made to the City Council on the basis of the consultation results:

1. That Council establish a Youth Advisory Group, to give a substantive voice to young people and ensure their active participation in decisions affecting them (to consist of a broad cross-section of young people, and several supportive adult members).
2. That Council employ the services of a full-time Youth Development Officer, to engage in service co-ordination, consult

with young people and develop new initiatives (to act as a central point of contact for young people, Council and other spheres of government and community).

3. That Council support the development of a range of recreational facilities for young people, to provide more leisure and recreational opportunities (including skating, blading and biking facilities; under-age activities such as raves, dances and band nights; and a youth service centre, and café).
4. That Council support the enhancement of already existing public spaces, to better accommodate for the needs of young people (through up-grading seating, shelters, parks, provision of basketball rings and notice boards, planting of flowers and trees in mall, etc.).

1.2 Queensland: Girls in Space [Brisbane]

Rationale and Aims:

This project, which received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program*, is being undertaken by a consortium composed of Contact Youth Theatre, Backbone Youth Arts, Digitarts Young Women on-line, The Brisbane City Council and Queensland and Northern Territory Multimedia (QANTM) Youth Works.

The specific needs and interests of young women are apparent in the fact that they tend to be less visible than other people in public spaces, parks and recreational facilities. Issues of safety, harassment, support and stereotyping all affect their uses of public space. It would appear that the only spaces owned, controlled or managed by young women for any substantial period of time are private and designated as being exclusive to young women. The aim of this project is to investigate fully issues relating to young women's use of and requirements for public space. Key issues for exploration includes young women's recreation participation, barriers to participation, social (including parental) influences on young women's leisure and young women's current use of public space.

The goals of the project are:

- to provide a variety of programmes for young women accessing public space
- to generate information relating to young women and public space

- to develop strategies to enhance young women's access to public space
- to trial and refine identified strategies
- to allow public policy makers to access and use the information.

Priority is to be placed at all stages of the project on the issues of young women who are most disadvantaged.

Methods and Strategies:

The project has an activity framework which consists of three phases:

Phase 1 will investigate the nature of young women's relationships to public space by identifying a range of issues relating to the ways in which research participants are involved in organised and supervised activity.

Phase 2 will explore specific issues relating to young women's participation and non-participation in public space activity.

Phase 3 will identify, trial and refine strategies which increase young women's access to, and participation and visibility in public spaces. Analysis at the end of this phase will result in the documentation of 'best practice' models.

At the time of writing, phase 1 of the project had been completed. The methods used for this phase are therefore the subject of the current review. The phase 1 methodology was constructed in order to explore the relationship that particular groups of young women in Brisbane have to public spaces. A 'focus group interview process' was the research technique used. This involves encouraging informal discussion and allows young people being interviewed to remain comfortable and familiar with others in the focus group. The focus group interviews were held with single gender and mixed gender groups. The groups ranged in size from two to ten people.

The identified research groups were all engaged in organised or semi-structured recreational activity. Young women who participated in the interviews were drawn from a wide spectrum of groups and activity areas. The sources of the focus group participants included a women's physical performance troupe, indigenous young people involved in an arts project, women who had participated in an internet training workshop, participants in a similar young people and public space research project, young people in drop-in centres, a library group, a holiday programme, a basketball clinic, pool hall, outdoor team building course, circus skills workshop, and a dance party.

The focus group discussions sought information about the following areas:

- participant's past and current leisure experiences and preferences both within structured and unstructured time
- participant's knowledge in relation to public and private spaces
- why participants make certain choices relating to recreation and public space usage
- participant's experiences relating to recreation and public space
- participant's advice and ideas relating to recreation and public space.

The researchers were conscious of the need to establish a sense of trust between the interviewer and the interviewees. It was found that single sex groups were usually more comfortable discussing gender-specific issues than those in mixed sex groups. Differences were also found in trust levels between focus group participants who were part of a long term project or existing networks, and those who were participating through social events or short term projects. Trust building was also facilitated by 'ice breaker' type activities (such as role-playing exercises). Interview sessions were also prefaced with an assurance of participant confidentiality and an explanation of the project goals. The process involved three separate interviews with each group, in order to develop group rapport and to give participants time to think about the issues between interviews. The interviews were recorded through the use of either tape recorders or a video camera.

The strengths of phase 1 of the project were:

interviewer sensitivity to use of language and vocal inflections, and emphasis on trust building as an essential part of the interview process

participation of young people from a wide variety of groups and activity areas, with inclusion of people from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, indigenous backgrounds, socio-economic backgrounds and sexualities

use of an observational researcher who worked with the interviewer to ensure against 'loaded' questions and to assist in evaluating sessions in order to create a more relaxed atmosphere and more meaningful information use of both mixed and single-sex groups, which allowed for assessment of the nature of gendered interactions, and the social differences within and between single-sex groups

The limitations of phase 1 of the project were:

difficulties in conducting three interview sessions with each group, due to the temporary nature of some of the activities, demands on participant's time, and lack of immediate or short term gratification for participants

some venues for the interviews did not work well, due to the fact they were held in peer social spaces such as a youth centre and places of non-neutral space

questions arose over the steps necessary to ensure confidentiality when the video camera was used to record group interviews and activities

Outcomes:

The outcome of phase 1 of the project was twofold. First, methodologically a number of strengths, weaknesses and questions were identified which can be used to facilitate research of this nature in the future. For example, it was found that interviews were more effective when:

participants were without time constraints (e.g., had another activity to go to)

participants were in a comfortable, relaxed environment (e.g., coffee shop)

discussions occurred within a chosen activity (e.g., participants could continue to play pool during discussion.

Secondly, this phase of the project identified the key factors which impact upon young women's leisure practices. Some of the themes to emerge were: the importance of social networks and social events; personal safety issues; issues relating to activity types and design of public space which took into account the specific needs of young women, such as indoor venues and non-competitive environments; different modes of transport; the ways in which social background influence the experiences of different groups of young women in public spaces; and the influence that parents/custodians have on girl's perceptions of and access to public space.

Arising from this information was a series of recommendations relating to the research process (e.g., alternatives to focus groups discussions), participant targets (e.g., parents, custodians and carers; young women with disabilities), and action proposals (e.g., developing protocols on public space use with teachers and police; engagement with public space designers regarding 'female aesthetics' and activities).

1.3 Western Australia: Streetwize Networks Project [Town of Bassendean]

Rationale and Aims:

This project was commissioned by the Town of Bassendean, through the Bassendean Youth Service and received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program.*

Many young people in the Bassendean area suffer disadvantage in terms of low socio-economic status, reduced educational achievement and lower school retention rates. Issues of youth unemployment, truanting, drug taking and offending, and conflicts with authority figures such as parents, police and shopkeepers, are prevalent. Young indigenous people have been identified as a particularly disadvantaged and marginalised group.

To address these issues, the Town of Bassendean, through the Bassendean Youth Services, initiated work with and for disadvantaged young people. The goals of this project are:

- to provide effective communication of ideas and concerns of young people regarding the use of public space
- to promote greater awareness of options available to young people regarding public space
- to promote and enrich the activities of young people in the area, in particular by facilitating youth access to public space
- to focus on promoting activities to enrich the development of disadvantaged young people in the area
- to create a positive profile for young people within the area and improve relations between local business and young people

- to enhance networks with other agencies in the region
- to involve young people in the Town Planning Scheme review for the Town of Bassendean
- to produce a draft Youth Policy Statement
- to improve Council's awareness of the needs of young people.

The intention of the project is to engage young people in esteem building activities, to promote a greater awareness of options for young people and to reduce harmful activities.

Methods and Strategies:

Given its diverse goals, the project is based upon a series of different, though interrelated strategies. These include:

- consultation with young people on a range of issues including the use of public space
- conducting a needs assessment of local services and options for young people
- generating positive publicity about young people
- drafting and evaluating youth policy options
- conducting a programme of activities which promotes healthy lifestyles
- providing information to young people on services and facilities
- providing opportunities for young people to participate and communicate.

The consultation phase of the project involved meetings and distribution of a survey with over two hundred young people. Focus groups were held at five local high schools, two youth activity camps, community groups (such as Venturers), and participants at the Bassendean Youth Service. A survey of local businesses was also undertaken, which focussed on the perception of young people by the business sector and the nature of interaction between the business sector and young people.

The strengths of the project include:

- detailed implementation plans, which are structured around clearly stated information regarding goal, strategy, activity, timeline and performance measure
- recognition of the multifaceted nature of public space and youth issues

The limitations of the project include:

- part-time staffing of the project
- inflexible nature of local government, particularly when it comes to budgets
- the 'at risk' target groups are difficult to access for meaningful consultations
- lack of existing youth participation networks
- ambitious programme objectives given the budget and time frame for completion

The project involves a wide range of activities. Some of these include writing newspaper articles and press releases, preparing a youth newsletter and shopping centre displays, undertaking surveys and consultations, examining and assessing youth policies, and being involved in music concerts, recreational activities and skill development programmes.

1.4 South Australia: OutaSpace Youth Speak [City of Adelaide]

Rationale and Aims:

The City of Adelaide conducted a youth needs survey in 1995 which identified conflicts about access to public space occurring between young people and other groups with vested interests in public space. This was followed by a youth development strategic plan in 1996. In December 1996 a youth forum was held to provide young people with an opportunity to express their views on Adelaide's inner city public spaces and make recommendations about how any problems could be dealt with. The objectives of the forum were:

- to provide an environment where young people are encouraged to recount their experiences and express their views
- to provide opportunities for discussion by incorporating the perspectives of young people, youth workers, traders, local government, security guards and police
- to make provisions for the expression and recording of recommendations that young people may make
- to develop the content and style of the forum so that it is relevant to young people
- to have young people involved in the organisation and running of the forum
- for the youth forum to result in positive changes in the way that public space is allocated for young people.

Methods and Strategies:

The forum was organised in conjunction with a working group of 12 young people over an eight week period. Four young people were invited to speak about their experiences in using public space in the City, and a panel of representatives from the police, trader organisations, security companies, the youth sector and local government presented various perspectives on public space issues.

Approximately 500 young people attended the forum. In addition to panel presentations and invited speakers, there were eight workshops conducted and 184 questionnaires completed. Over 50 separate recommendations were developed.

The strengths of the forum were:

each objective was accompanied by clearly set-out criteria relating to (i) implementation strategy, (ii) outcome, and (iii) evaluation

ongoing commitment demonstrated by Council and other relevant bodies to listen to what young people had to say, and act upon the recommendations.

The limitations of the forum were:

organised as a single event, and one method of consultation used

covered too many topics and speakers in the time allocated.

Outcome:

The forum came up with a lengthy list of recommendations. These were later prioritised and edited to produce practical and achievable implementation strategies. The recommendations were grouped into the following areas: social interaction in public space; recreation in public space; young people from culturally diverse backgrounds; safety for young people in public space; cultural expression in the public domain; other issues raised; and youth participation in implementing strategies.

The high priority recommendations included:

- set up a youth specific hangout (action: Council, trader organisations, young people)
- provide skating facilities in the city that are useful for in-line skating, skate boarding and free style cycling (action: Council, young people, businesses, Dept. of Sport, Recreation and Racing)
- organise regular outdoor live concerts for all-ages audiences (action: SA music industry, Carclew, Arts SA, Council)
- allocate a space where young people are able to practice and showcase their talents (action: as above)
- involve young people in the development and implementation of projects that are developed as a result of the forum (action: Council).

Since the forum, a number of initiatives relevant to the issues raised and recommendations have been taken. Among these are:

- development of a 'perceptions and reality' booklet to provide information on a range of issues affecting young people and the business community, including citizenship and access to public space
- negotiation of an agreement on 'police and youth services protocol', which is intended to strengthen communication and collaboration between the police and the youth sector
- development of a 'youth reconciliation project', that will promote the diversity of cultures amongst young people and which is aimed at reducing violence between different groups of young people visiting the city
- inclusion of a panel session with young people as part of 'police youth training', which has been extended across South Australia
- planned construction of a public skating park with a range of equipment for 1998
- provision of 'performance space' which caters to the needs of young people.

A close collaboration between key stakeholders appears to underpin the policy development and project implementation processes in Adelaide.

1.5 Western Australia: Youth Forum [City of Perth]

Rationale and Aims

The concept of a Youth Forum was to involve young people in identifying issues and problems of importance to youth in the city and Northbridge, as well as solutions. A Youth Forum Organising Committee was set up, comprised of youth and community organisations and youth representatives.

The objectives of the Youth Forum were to:

- identify issues which are important to youth in the City of Perth
- promote a positive forum for youth in the City of Perth
- identify key partnerships for youth groups and agencies
- identify key actions to be addressed by the City of Perth and other agencies
- make recommendations on the outcomes of the consultations and the Forum, to document and direct to the City and other agencies.

The target group was to be young people (generally between 12 and 25 years of age) who use the City, including mainstream youth and 'at risk' groups.

Methods and Strategies

The Youth Forum concept involved a review of existing literature dealing with the geographical area and the issues of young people in public space. The main thrust of the project was consultations with young people, using a variety of methods. The guiding principles of the Youth Forum were that first, the youth population is not uniform or homogeneous, and that consequently a number of different strategies would be needed to target different youth subcultures; and secondly, that the focus of the Forum would be better directed to achieve positive outcomes over a period of time rather than one large event.

The consultations were conducted using a variety of methods. These included:

- a street intercept survey carried out over a 24 hour/7 day period at city locations where large numbers of young people are present to ascertain key issues for youth in the city
- school-based consultations undertaken in seven schools, with the majority of students in Year 10
- a website survey was set up on six computers at the Perth Railway Station as part of an event *Rant & Rave @ Artrage*
- video interviews were conducted with young people by young people during the weekend of the opening of the Artrage Festival, by 'roving reporters' at different city sites
- specific consultations were undertaken with indigenous young people, involving audio interviews conducted by Aboriginal youth reporters from 6AR (Aboriginal Radio), discussion sessions

- with students at Clontarf Aboriginal College, and by community agencies working at the street level of indigenous young people
- specific consultations were undertaken with ethnic minority young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, in conjunction with the Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre and involving participants from seven different national backgrounds
- specific consultations with 'at risk' young people (e.g., truants, vulnerable street present young people, homeless young people), which involved direct service providers which had already established rapport and trust speaking with the young people on a one-to-one basis.

The findings of the consultation were compiled into a report, and presented to City Councillors and the Minister for Youth Affairs.

The strengths of the Youth Forums include:

- consultations beforehand with service agencies to determine most effective methods of consultation
- linkage of Youth Forum project with other youth events and initiatives such as Artrage Festival and Skateboard Association's Street Intercept Survey as part of its business case for an integrated youth facility in the city
- sensitivity to different youth populations, and the necessity for different types of consultation
- variety of consultations, over an extended period of time.

The limitations of the Youth Forum included:

- investigation of other users of public space, and how they view young people and youth activities in inner city area
- need to develop Action Plan as follow-up to consultation process.

Outcomes:

The Youth Forum provides a detailed survey of key issues relating to young people's experiences in and use of public spaces in the City of Perth. The Forum findings were presented to the Council, the Ministers for Youth Affairs and Aboriginal Affairs, key agencies and the media. A number of recommendations were made, relating to access, venues, personal safety, transportation, positive public events, and youth participation.

1.6 Queensland:
Logan City Public Space Initiative
[Open Family Australia]

Rationale and Aims:

There was concern by a wide range of people that there would be an increase in crime and violence in Logan City, fed by boredom, poor social infrastructure and a general absence of social cohesion. This project was part of a state-wide initiative from the Community Services Division of the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, the aim of which was to seek ways to reduce the instances and intensity of conflict associated with young people's use of public space. The project was undertaken by Open Family Australia beginning in March 1996.

The objectives of the project were:

- to define the various target groups within the context of the entire city and define their needs in relation to the project
- to identify workable methods of liaison and practice to reduce conflict between young people and other users of public space
- to determine community understanding of and attitudes toward the issue, with the view to establishing sustainable methods of practice that could be owned and operated by the local community in the long term.

Methods and Strategies:

The project used a range of research techniques, mainly dealing with two key population groups. Adults were consulted through the use of individual interviews with identified stakeholders, and focus groups which included identified stakeholders and the general public. Young people were consulted through audio interviews with 51 young people in eight identified public spaces, and workshops held with 24 classes in seven high schools.

A broad range of questions was asked as part of the consultations. Responses were provided by the adults and young people on such issues as what a future Logan City would look like; main community concerns; where young people hang out and conflict is most likely; responses to public space initiative; police-youth relations; security guard-youth relations; youth services; art and recreation in public space; young people and cultural issues; what people want to see in their city.

The strengths of the project included:

- detailed presentation of findings, accompanied by informed discussion of the issues raised by the findings
- development of practical recommendations pertaining to each issue area covered in the consultations
- carefully constructed model of possible service delivery.

The limitations of the project included:

- how to build community and youth support for the initiative in the face of cynicism and resistance from certain sectional interests
- limited range of consultation measures

addressing more fully issues of inter-agency co-operation and youth advocacy.

Outcomes:

The key outcome of the extensive consultations was the development of a recommended model of service delivery. Given the considerable work done in putting the model together, based on the information at hand, it is useful to describe the model in greater detail.

The key aim of the model is *the reduction of instances and intensity of conflict involving young people and other users of public space.* To achieve this, the model proposes three main component strategies:

1. ***The provision of activity-based responses in identified public spaces in key times.***

   an environment where young people have access to art/recreation activities in youth appropriate space

   an environment where young people can access existing support services through the consistent presence of a detached youth worker

   an environment that is youth appropriate yet inclusive of the needs of all stakeholders

   an environment that is inclusive of the needs of different cultural and subcultural groups

   an environment that provides young people with the opportunity to develop a sense of ownership of the particular space

- an environment that is welcoming of local community input and participation
- an environment where police and security are an active and integral part of a positive experience for young people.

2. ***Working with identified public space stakeholders toward mutually beneficial goals.***
   - monitoring of, and liaison with, local media regarding presentation of young people
   - liaison with, and support of, site-specific public space stakeholders where the activity component is located
   - liaison with planning, city council, regarding the planning of public space to ensure it is inclusive of the needs of young people.

3. ***The provision of individual support to young people and referral into existing support services.***
   - accessing young people into existing support services to address their individual needs
   - individual support of young people accessing the target sites .

Each specific area of concern listed in the model was accompanied by a detailed account of implementation processes and desired outcomes. The model is grounded in thorough discussion of practical issues, and realistic assessment of what might be achieved through any particular measure. A budget outline accompanied the model proposal.

At the time of writing, the present Queensland government had made policy decisions which have effectively seen the demise of this initiative.

1.7 New South Wales: No Standing project [Bankstown, Penrith, Greater Taree]

Rationale and Aims:

In response to concerns about various public space issues, particularly about what was perceived to be the over-policing of young people, the Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA) developed the young people and community space project. The project aims to document the ways in which young people use community space and to explore positive means by which conflict in the use of community space can be addressed. The project has a number of phases ranging from information collection to development of action kits. The first phase was funded by the New South Wales Cabinet Office. The main objective of this phase was to research a series of questions. These included:

- what constitutes community space and how do young people use it?
- are time of day, age of young people and other factors (such as cultural background, gender, employment status, socio-economic status) significant; do patterns emerge and how does this compare with other age groups?
- are there regional differences and are these themes transferable to other areas, and are the same factors likely to exist in five years time?
- what aspects of young people's use of community space cause problems, why and with whom, and are these problems likely to lead to conflict?
- how can town planning design best accommodate young people's needs and usage patterns as well as those of other groups?

The research involved a review of the literature in the area and a variety of case studies dealing with specific public space projects. A significant part of the research was based on direct consultations with young people in three separate localities.

Methods and Strategies:

The case study areas for the purposes of the consultations were Bankstown, Penrith and Greater Taree. These areas were selected on the basis of obtaining a mix of urban and non-urban areas, and choosing at least one area with a significant indigenous population and one area where young people from a variety of cultural backgrounds lived.

A description of geographical location, size, social composition and relevant social indicators (such as unemployment rates) was provided for each area, drawing upon 1991 census data.

The targets for consultation included young people, youth services, shopping centre owners or managers, police and local councils. Individuals were contacted through existing networks and contacts. Few interviews were carried out with young people directly, although existing local research on public space issues was drawn upon. Much of the understanding gained of the views of young people was obtained indirectly, through youth advocates.

Questions to be asked were sent to the interviewees a week prior to the time arranged for the interview in order that answers could be prepared in advance. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, with answers being recorded by hand. The typed responses were then sent back to the interviewee to check on accuracy and to add any further information.

The combination of direct interviews and drawing upon existing local surveys (e.g., Centre management exit surveys of shopping centre users) enabled the project to provide reasonably accurate profiles of how young people use public space in each area. Different kinds of questions were asked of the police; shopping centre staff; young people; youth service providers; and local council staff. Issues which were broadly seen as affecting the use of community space by young people included unemployment and low incomes, lack of alternative venues, and availability of transportation.

Other issues discussed included the nature and sources of conflict over the use of public space by young people in each area, fear of crime, the current means of addressing conflict (particularly with respect to policing and use of security guards), the extent to which young people were consulted in relation to planning, and examples of youth-inclusive approaches to community space.

The strengths of the project include:

- consideration of a range of 'stakeholder' views and perceptions of the nature of the issues
- good review of relevant academic literature and community-based research, and incorporation of information from commercial institutions and local surveys
- development of basic principles, and indication of how these should be linked to practical action and special projects.

The limitations of the project include:

- relatively small number of participants in the consultation process, due partly to time and resource limitations
- low numbers of young people consulted about the issues.

Outcomes:

The results of the first phase of the project were published in a book under the title *No Standing*.

The report highlighted the need for further action in a number of areas, and as such is useful as a lobbying and advocacy tool. Recommendations for further action include:

- review of the planning process, involving a public education campaign about basic planning principles and processes
- development of published guidelines on the planning process for youth workers
- publication of best practice guidelines for planning for young people, for local government planners
- further research into best practice in shopping centre management
- a public education campaign to inform the public that young people have a right to use public spaces, and to explain why they congregate in such spaces
- a co-ordinated state government strategy to bring together various agencies to address the perceived problems of young people's use of community space.

1.8 Other Relevant Projects

New South Wales:
CBD Public Space Research Project
[City of Parramatta]

The Streetz Working Party, comprised of local professionals working with young people, has been involved in researching a range of public space issues including, for example, identifying harmonious alternative methods of utilising public space that are of little or no cost to consumers, and predisposing factors to crime in public spaces.

New South Wales:
Gosford Shopfront Youth Information Service
[Gosford]

This service provides an outreach service in the sense that youth workers attempt to attract young people to use a programme or service and to provide a youth-friendly setting for these. The role of the Shopfront is to provide information and a range of opportunities to access recreational, arts, educational and social services, and to provide a drug and alcohol free, safe and supportive environment for young people. It also contains a youth café which provides affordable food and drink.

Northern Territory: YMCA Palmerston Youth Outreach Project [Palmerston]

This project involves streetwork, a form of outreach which means that youth workers usually spend a lot of time in places where young people hang out. The aims of the project are to facilitate an environment which promotes positive and respectful communication and interaction with young people. The role of the workers is to make contact with young people, and to assist them by providing information, support, employment and vocational opportunities, and other resources.

Northern Territory: Making Space [Centre for Social Research]

This project examined the extent and incidence of anti-social behaviour by young people in Darwin, and the experiences of young people in public spaces in that city. The project involved extensive interviews with young people and older stakeholders, as well as compilation of relevant criminal justice statistics. The report argues strongly in favour of a youth outreach service for the Darwin community, based on strategies which seek to involve young people in the uses of the spaces they frequent, to promote positive images of young people and youth culture, and to sponsor or initiate socially developmental programmes for young people.

A graphic depiction of the recommended model put forward by the study team is shown in the accompanying table.

The report was released in February 1998, which precluded more detailed summary of its main findings, methods and strategies, and outcomes.

Model Youth Outreach Service

Programme Features

- Advocacy programmes
- Promotion of restorative justice and reintegrative shaming in area of juvenile justice
- Development of programmes, activities, projects, inclusive practices, street level help
- Provision of information, referral and support

Programme Objectives

- Fostering public acceptance of young people's needs and promoting positive images of young people
- Networking with other community organisations and state agencies in order to foster positive change, such as adoption of community policing styles of policing and encouragement of commercial sponsorship of community projects for young people
- Designing young people into the community through provision of youth-friendly spaces, and through providing health and training information and referrals

Source: drawn from model of figure and discussions in Tyler, Jablonka & Flick, 1998, pp.16-17.

2. Creative Use of Existing Places

2.1 Victoria: Melton Youth Access Audit Team [Shire of Melton]

Rationale and Aims:

This project was commissioned by Melton City Council, and received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program.*

With forty-seven per cent of residents under the age of 25, Melton is a young person's place. Concerns are regularly expressed by some residents about noise levels, young people who hang around, and perceived offending behaviour. The Shire Council, however, has been negotiating with young people over things such as skateboard ramps, and has been interested in developing positive relationships with young people in an effort to influence community opinion.

The goals of this project are:

- to document differences between youth friendly and youth unfriendly spaces
- to conduct youth friendliness ratings (access audits) of targeted local businesses, community agencies and public spaces
- to provide feedback to 'space managers', and where possible, actively assist the 'space managers' to develop youth friendly areas
- to promote the project as a model of national significance.

Methods and Strategies:

The innovative aspect of this project is the youth access audit. A youth access audit team was put together consisting of eleven young people from the local area, most of whom are young female students, aged 15 years.

The project involved a survey of 167 young people to gauge their idea of youth friendliness and suggestions for places to audit. A survey was also undertaken with 70 local businesses and services (those mentioned by young people as being places which they would like to be audited), to provide them with an opportunity to state what they think is friendly about their business or service.

After compiling the results of the surveys, a model youth access audit was devised. The processes of the youth access audit involve the following:

speaking with the manager/owner to ask permission to carry out the audit
talking with the staff of the business/service
entering the space anonymously alone
entering the space with a group of friends
entering the space anonymously and just browsing
entering the space anonymously and buying
writing up their findings individually
writing up the findings in conjunction with the rest of the team's findings
writing a report for the business/service involved about their level of youth friendliness with suggestions for improvement if needed
presenting the report to the business/service.

The same list was to be used for each audit. The list included:

Attitude of people
- — when you first walked in
- — when you asked for help
- — when you were alone
- — when you were with a group of friends

Cost
- — in relation to other similar businesses
- — in relation to the average money young people have to spend
- — in relation to the cost of other items in their business
- — in relation to value for money

Hours of operation
- — in relation to school hours
- — in relation to other similar businesses

Discrimination
- — in relation to age
- — in relation to size of your group
- — in relation to clothes
- — in relation to hair style
- — in relation to image
- — in relation to gender

Environment (both physical and social)
- — cleanliness
- — layout
- — aesthetics
- — surroundings

Lighting
- — inside business
- — outside business

— along the street
— signage

Location
— in relation to public transport
— in relation to other businesses
— in relation to its hours of operation

Safety
— number of people inside the business
— number of people outside the business
— lighting inside and outside the business
— feeling when inside

The project involves auditing or giving a youth friendly rating on 25 places in Melton, including both private and public space, and both shops and parks. The kinds of places chosen for the audit include youth outreach services, health services, bowling alley, cinemas, entertainment arcade, parks, retail outlets, library, music shop, fast food shop, skate park and leisure centre.

The strengths of the project include:

innovative project design which educates each participant at the same time as providing important information about local businesses and services

investigates a range of dimensions of young people's experiences in public places

young people in control of project and solutions are therefore relevant to them

strong support from local shire council, local businesses and community agencies, and many young people.

The limitations of the project include:

- problems with the completion date for the surveys, the length of the youth survey, interpretation of some of the words used in the survey and given in response to the questions
- planning stage did not involve high levels of consultation or participation from young people
- different timelines for businesses and young people could affect the implementation process arising from project results
- private sector may not understand all of the project's aims, nor agree with them.

Outcomes:

At the time of writing the project was still continuing. However, the idea of a youth access audit has gained considerable attention in the locality and nationally. The surveys had been completed, and a number of initial audits were in train. The intention of the project is to increase the number and quality of youth friendly spaces in Melton, and in the process help to foster the adoption of policies which improve young people's relationship with the community at large.

2.2 South Australia: CHAMPS by the River project [Murray Bridge]

Rationale and Aims:

This project has been undertaken by the Community Health Adolescent Murraylands Peer Support (CHAMPS), which is administered by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The project was funded by the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program*.

After extensive consultation in the region with service providers a number of youth needs were identified. These included relief from boredom; the costs of travel to and from amenities and activities in Adelaide; the need to be involved in an activity that is highly valued by the wider community; and for young people to be recognised as contributing members of society. The circumstances of young people in Murray Bridge include high youth unemployment rates, high levels of early school leaving, poverty, and lack of transport.

The overall goal of CHAMPS is to enable 13 to 18 year old young people in the Murray-Mallee region to have a voice in shaping the way in which mental health services are provided to them and to participate in mental health promotion activities. The key strategic objectives of CHAMPS are:

- to develop a CHAMPS youth forum consisting of young people in the region, to assess the mental health needs of young people, assess how agencies can work more effectively with young people, to advise agencies on how mental health can be promoted amongst their peers, and to provide relevant agencies with access to a youth perspective on mental health issues to develop a youth access and resource network (YARN), which enables young people to talk with other young people in a peer support framework by telephone while waiting to receive help from local agencies, if needed, or as an adjunct to this help

to create a model of best practice for working in partnership with young people.

Within this broad framework of aims and strategies, the CHAMPS by the River project was developed. The specific aim of this project is to provide young people in Murray Bridge and surrounding areas with safe, free, accessible, alcohol-free recreation, and to give young people a sense of pride, ownership and belonging to accompany the skills obtained by being involved in the project.

Methods and Strategies:

A crucial factor in the project was the support provided by the local council, which provided the land upon which the recreational activities were built, access to machinery for construction of the facility, and access to the expertise of council engineering and planning staff.

The project initially involved a small working group which consisted of a core of 4 young men aged 15 to 17 years. As the project progressed young women in the larger CHAMPS youth forum became interested and more directly involved. The young people met regularly with council staff and elected members. More generally, they were involved with council planning and engineering officers, CAMHS mental health workers, Aboriginal workers and community service groups to research, plan, develop and revegetate the recreational reserve selected as the site for the project.

The project constructed a skate ramp and bike track, with an art area and gazebo completed in the latter stages. The young people worked on the project to choose the site from those offered by the council, surveyed the site, worked with a sign writer in designing and painting the sign, planned the track lay-out with the council planner, assisted with the delivery and installation of the skate ramp, met with the country art officer and builder of the art area, worked on site to shape mounds and clear away rock and debris, and worked with council employees to finalise jump angles and safety aspects of the bike track.

The strengths of the project include.

provision of tangible outcome which benefits young people generally in the region

active support of the local council and others in the local community

participation in design and planning by young people who had had difficulty getting by in the school system and are not academic achievers, and who are proud of their achievement, improved in self-confidence and negotiating skills.

The limitations of the project include:

relatively small number of young people directly involved in specific project

need to evaluate critically issues such as gendered nature of recreational spaces and types of facilities appropriate to different sections of youth population.

Outcomes:

The area has become a meeting place for local young people. The process of design, planning and construction involving young people directly had the benefit of gaining significant media recognition of the capabilities of young people and contributed to a positive public image. Community acknowledgement of a need to be filled, was complemented by the achievement of concrete outcomes.

2.3 Victoria:
Skatesafe Program
[City of Melbourne]

Rationale and Aims:

The Skatesafe Program is undertaken by the City of Melbourne. It was recognised that the use of in-line skates and skateboards as a means of transport and for recreational purposes is growing at unprecedented levels, and that there was rapid growth in skate use in the City, especially during school holiday breaks. Concern was expressed over the public's perception of safety, and complaints about skateboard activity. It was recognised that effective management of skating is only partly addressed by provision of a skate venue.

Accordingly, consultations were undertaken, which established that issues of safety, access and enjoyment of the City were of prime concern, as were issues of public rights to use the city streets and workable enforcement.

The objectives of the Skatesafe work group are:

- to increase the level of responsible use of skates
- to decrease the number of skating/pedestrian 'near misses' reported
- to increase the community's awareness of where skating is allowed and where it is not allowed.

In responding to these objectives the project was based upon community consultation and inclusion of key stakeholders, and encouragement of community management and responsibility for skating in the city.

Methods and Strategies:

Consultations were undertaken with a wide range of people. Submissions were received from the public at large. In addition, community consultations were undertaken with peak retail associations including the Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Traders Association, city skating businesses, and young skaters. Contact was also made with neighbouring municipal councils and other capital city councils. A petition signed by 710 people was also received.

A community liaison committee was formed, comprising representatives from the skate industry, traders, police, skaters and Melbourne City Council to monitor and evaluate the management option employed, the education and awareness campaign and any other relevant issues.

The detailed proposal for the management of skating in the city included:

- the provision of a skating venue
- nominated preferred access routes through the central business district and designated No-Skate zones
- the development and promulgation of a Code of Conduct
- an education and awareness programme involving the skate industry, police and the general community
- the development and implementation of physical measures to inhibit skating in public places

the development of a Local Law which includes provision for issuing infringement notices for reckless and unsafe behaviour and damage to property.

The strengths of the Skatesafe project include:

wide ranging consultations and research

clear goals and objectives

combination of physical infrastructure and social management

establishment of clear guidelines and opportunities

relevant awareness and education campaigns for target groups.

The limitations of the Skatesafe project include:

possible resistance from ill-informed traders and members of public

enforcement of protocol for regulation of skate zones

ensuring that Code of Conduct seen as facilitating skating, rather than as imposed on young people as social control measure.

Overall, the Skatesafe project represents a concerted and comprehensive attempt to manage skating in the central business district. The major issues are those dealing with safety, access, enjoyment, rights, opportunity and workable enforcement. It is recognised that the use of certain public spaces for these purposes requires an integrated and sensitive plan of action.

Outcomes

The main outcomes of the Skatesafe project has been an increased awareness of skating issues among a wide number of different constituencies in the central business district area, a detailed proposal for the management of skating in the city, establishment of clear guidelines and principles for strategic action, and proposed amendments to the Local Law relating to skating (e.g., repeal Toy Vehicles Local Law 1992; amend Public Activities Local Law 1994) which are informed by realistic appraisal of the issues and extensive community consultation.

2.4 Northern Territory: Cyber Kafé [Tennant Creek]

Rationale and Aims:

This project is a partnership between Tennant Creek High School and the Australian Youth Foundation which provided funding under its *Social Belonging Grants Program*.

Tennant Creek is one of the most isolated towns in Australia and has limited social and recreational activities for young people. The intention of the project is to establish an Internet Web at the high school which could act as a 'drop-in' centre, either in a physical, visiting way or via modems.

The objectives of the project include:

- providing young people in isolated localities with access to current information
- provision of networking between students, teachers and schools
- provision of an alternative meaningful social activity
- gaining a better understanding of technology and its applications
- overcoming the barriers of culture/ethnicity and distance
- improving the skills, experience and knowledge of young people in order that they might then empower others
- giving young people the opportunity to grow in their own view.

For the young people, the project offered the chance to learn and also be entertained, as well as to 'level' themselves with their peers in more settled, less isolated regions. The project is designed to accommodate all young people in the region including non-students.

Methods and Strategies:

The project was developed in three stages. These included:

1. Setting up the network hardware, configuring the equipment and initial training of those who form the management committee of the cyber café, and school staff
2. Opening the network to school classes and opening the cyber café to young people after school hours, with management committee members to act as basic trainers for those wishing to participate in on-line café activities
3. Bringing on-line the Aboriginal Community Schools and Station Schools in the Barkly Region via modem dial-up into the high school's network.

Young people participating in the management of the café are trained on internet access, as is high school staff. Students from a number of schools and youth services are involved in ongoing project development and management. This has been accompanied by development of a project booklet, regular communication on associated developments via a school newsletter, and training of students and others in all facets of the Internet.

The strengths of the project include:

creative use of up-to-date communications technology in providing alternative 'spaces' for young people to hang out, and for which they have responsibility to manage

use of local school for out-of-school and non-school purposes, and extensive use of school resources and expertise for wider community benefit active co-operation with other schools and agencies, and in particular indigenous organisations, and ability to provide cultural and social integrity for the Aboriginal culture of the region

development of protocols with respect to use of system, covering issues such as content standards for contributions, code of ethics and grievance processes.

The limitations of the project include:

maintaining a commitment from the supervising volunteers, which requires collecting monies, showing newcomers the operation of the equipment and being in charge of refreshments

potential costs for disadvantaged young people, given that fees are required to meet operating costs of system

need for evaluation of patterns of use among young people and what kind of information and activities they are engaging in with the technology.

Outcomes:

The project has generated considerable interest among young people in the town. It has also gained the attention of organisations such as the regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission branch and the Papulu ApparrKari Language Centre, which are interested in the communication and education potential of the system, especially given the enormous distances, isolation and geographic hardships of the region.

2.5 New South Wales: Not Just Buses and Trains [Blacktown Local Government Area]

Rationale and Aims:

Some members of the local Blacktown community had expressed concern about the ways in which large numbers of young people, with little adult supervision, were using local public spaces such as train stations and bus interchanges. In 1996 the Blacktown Youth Services Association received funding from the Crime Prevention Division of the Attorney General's Department to research and address the issues concerning young people's use of public spaces around five train stations in the local area.

The objectives of the project were:

- to research public space issues involving young people in public transport stops
- to devise strategies to address any issues arising from young people's use of public space in these areas.

Methods and Strategies:

The project involved interviews with nearly 150 young people in the local area. The findings of this survey showed that the larger interchanges are popular social spaces for young people, who use them actively (e.g., soccer, romance, fights, noise); that the large numbers of young people, mainly students, in the area may lead to a perception of danger and a fear of crime; that 'fights' were interpreted differently depending upon the prejudices of the witnesses (e.g., inter-school rivalry or gang thing); and that young people had fears about using public transport at night because of deserted spaces, alcohol, and lack of security measures, and young women spoke about harassment.

After identifying the issues, an action plan was developed. This is based upon a series of prescriptions regarding what to do and how:

- be clear about what you are trying to achieve
- know what the issues are for the public space that you are dealing with
- decide what organisations you need to make contact with and at what level of the hierarchy this needs to occur
- find some common ground with people within these organisations and use this as a starting point from which to build a working relationship
- sell your idea to other local youth workers and services and get them involved
- start off on a small scale, and remember that the rules are different working with young people in public spaces and it might take a while to establish what these are
- the spaces are public so don't just work with young people
- make the most of any opportunities that arise.

A crucial aspect of the project was the recognition that public space youth work is different to centre-based youth work.

The strengths of the project include:

- integration of research and action strategies
- emphasis on local factors and conditions in devising strategies of intervention
- effective use of educational pamphlets to publicise the project.

The limitations of the project include:

- greater analysis needed of some types of youth activities (e.g., fights) and what to do about these
- linking the youth survey with survey of other patrons of public transport.

Outcomes:

The interview phase of the project provided a useful starting point for the development of locally based action plans. Different strategies are appropriate for different sites, and in dealing with different kinds of problems.

For example, at Mt.Druitt station the run-down appearance of the interchange area had contributed to an overall negative impression among people that the area was unsafe. Youth workers began to organise weekly activities at the interchange. Shortly afterwards, the local Police Citizens Youth Club officer became involved in the activities, with the added attraction of a mobile PCYC entertainment van equipped with computers, games and sporting equipment. With the support of transport providers, the local council, a local community arts organisation and town centre committee, chalk arts workshops were held on the footpaths at the interchange. This initiative has raised the profile of local youth services, and enhanced the general appearance and friendliness of the interchange.

2.6 Victoria: Your Space Our Place project [Shire of Moira]

Rationale and Aims

This project is a joint venture between the Moira Shire and Cutting Edge Youth Services (CEYS) and received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program*. Townships included in the programme area include Cobram, Katamatite, Nathalia, Numurkah, Strathmerton, Tungamah and Yarrawonga.

The project is based on the development of a comprehensive model of service delivery that will link a range of programmes and options for young people who live in the disparate communities that make up the Moira Shire. The aim is to increase access to information, services and suitable open space facilities, involve young people in their communities and meaningful decision-making processes that impact on their lives.

While intended to address the needs of all young people between 12 and 17 years of age (with flexibility to include those up to the age of 25), the programmes and options especially target those young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; from a non-English-speaking background; experiencing or at risk of family violence; those who are not in stable education, or at risk of leaving education early; those who have been unemployed for more than six months; who are financially disadvantaged; and who are sole parents.

The overall programme incorporates 10 key activities and projects:

- establishment and support of a young people's management committee, known as the Moira Youth Reference Group
- assist in the establishment of a new youth agency, known as the CEYS
- developing open space around the CEYS building that is relevant to young people's needs
- improving transport access for young people—purchase and fit-out a double decker information and access bus
- creating a positive image of young people through the media
- enhance communication between young people and the police in the community
- holding at least one activity in each community to inform young people about the Youth Reference Group and the projects and activities people are participating in
- encouraging improved communication between young people and older adults in the community by sharing skills, ideas and working together on the building and to organise events
- celebration with an alcohol and drug-free dance party
- develop a resource kit of how to do all of the above.

Given the holistic approach adopted by the programme team, it is not possible to describe and evaluate each aspect of the programme in this review. However, the integrated approach which has been implemented provides a useful model of positive intervention on public space issues in rural (as well as urban) locations.

Methods and Strategies:

A crucial aspect of the programme has been the willingness of the co-ordinators to seek out partnerships with a wide range of community organisations (e.g., church groups, police, businesses, service clubs), to collaborate with other relevant services (e.g., health providers), and to encourage the widest possible participation of young people in both service and consumer capacities.

To illustrate the innovative and specific character of public space projects in rural areas it is instructive to examine the programme's attempt to improve transport and access for young people by providing an events and information access bus.

The plan was to locate, purchase and outfit a suitable double decker bus in order to provide a flexible service for young people. The intention of the bus project is to provide transport to events, access to information, training programmes, confidential advice and simply, friendly space. There is provision of access for people with a disability.

Young people are to be involved (with other volunteers) to assist in outfitting the bus, undertaking necessary mechanical repairs, and painting the bus mural.

The strengths of the bus project include:

- immediate benefits once bus outfitted and painted
- provides transportation for young people to concerts, sports carnivals, pools, dance parties, camps and other developmental activities

involves young people, particularly those who may present social difficulties (e.g., difficult family relationships, poor social skills) directly in mechanical and artistic maintenance and outfitting of bus.

The limitations of the bus project include:

the only double decker buses in Australia within the project price range had a maximum speed of between 65–75 kilometres per hour

one bus doing pickup across the Shire is inadequate given the distances to travel and the demands on the bus, and on the bus drivers

ensuring that there are sufficient volunteer drivers with appropriate licences and safe driving records.

In the end, a 29 seat Hino bus was purchased, and on-going work is being undertaken on developing a community transport policy and procedure document for the Shire.

Outcomes:

The Your Space Our Place programme involves a wide range of activities, projects and people. The programme emphasises direct youth participation, including educating young people in topical youth issues (e.g., drugs, safe sex) to enable them to participate in key projects as 'peer educators'.

The programme relies upon a wide number of young and older volunteers in the Moira Shire area, and has organised working bees to assist in specific tasks (e.g., building design and renovation).

An important part of the programme is media liaison, which includes on-going protocols with the local media outlets regarding how young people are presented in that media. The programme also views as important, on-going communication with police, parents and other members of the community about youth and family issues, and direct participation in project events and activities as appropriate.

A significant aspect of the programme is the ability of the co-ordinators to assess goals and objectives on a continuous basis, and to modify plans as appropriate or as required by circumstance. Flexibility, as well as communication across a wide number of sectors, are crucial components of the model.

3. Art and Drama in Public Spaces

3.1 Western Australia: Road Safety Urban Art Project [City of Gosnells]

Rationale and Aims:

The City of Gosnells urban art programme began as a response to Council's concern over escalating graffiti costs. The theme of the programme is *Safe, Seen and Legal*, and it recognises the talent and skills generated by the graffiti subculture as valid in legal situations.

The programme incorporates a number of elements. These include weekly practice sessions, a road safety project, visits to local schools to talk about graffiti, clean up of graffiti by resourcing young people referred from Juvenile Justice for community work, and ongoing cleaning and maintenance of legal urban sites such as bus shelters.

The aims of the overall project are:

- to offer young spraywriters an opportunity to express themselves in their own unique way on designated legal areas
- to involve the young people in actual decision-making process of the project
- to reduce the city's graffiti maintenance costs.

In 1995, the City of Gosnells and the Traffic Road Board of Western Australia jointly funded the urban art programme to undertake work on road safety. The objective of the project was to use road safety murals on local bus shelters as a means to promote road safety among the target group of young drivers and pedestrians, particularly males between the ages of 16 and 25 years.

Strategies and Methods:

Selected messages and sites where chosen for the project. Some of the themes covered were 'Watch the Road', 'Wear Your Helmet', 'Check Your Brakes—your life's at stake', 'Don't Speed', 'Don't drive like an animal', 'I thought you said—one more wouldn't kill me', 'Don't drink or in the clink', 'Speed Kills—Ask the Experts', 'Buckle Up', and 'Cycle Safe'.

The young people involved in the project come from a variety of sources, such as local high schools, residents of the community, youth groups and referrals from juvenile justice. Regular weekly practice sessions are held which focus on the development of skills. Violent or aggressive art work is not encouraged or accepted. Acknowledgement is made of individual artists for the work they do at any particular site.

The strengths of the project include:

- organised and youth-friendly approach to graffiti activity
- benefits to local council, road safety campaign and young people
- brightens up city locations and makes cityscape much more interesting.

The limitations of the project include:

- tends to be used mostly by mainstream young people rather than those deemed to be 'at risk'
- makes a clear distinction between 'vandals who tag' and spray writers who put up 'pieces', but does not explore the link between the two or the attractions of illegal graffiti work.

Outcomes:

The project has several benefits. First, a number of older artists have gone on to be involved in various private tender projects. Second, the local neighbourhood has been made visually interesting by the range of commissioned legal graffiti art projects. Third, graffiti art has gained a certain popular legitimacy as a cultural form through these types of projects.

In an evaluation based upon a survey of people attending a series of twilight concerts in a local park, the following kind of information was provided: 90 per cent of the participants had seen the City's bus shelters decorated with road safety murals, of which 69 per cent thought they were excellent. Of the respondents, 93 per cent thought there should be more of them painted. When asked what sort of messages the shelters promote, the four top responses were don't drink and drive, road safety, buckle up and don't speed. 61 per cent said that the murals do help to educate people about road safety, generally by making people aware of the issue.

3.2 Western Australia: Fair Ground Project [Broome]

Rationale and Aims:

This project was developed by the Broome Youth Theatre and received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program*.

The Broome Youth Theatre Project devised a project to workshop the musical play 'Fair Ground', written by local playwright Russell Massey, bringing this work into production for performance to the wider community. The play is the story of children living on the street, who are the victims of many of the abuses identified as community problems.

The project seeks to address a number of youth needs in the Broome area. These include training for employment; programmes that target school leavers, unemployed, homeless and disadvantaged young people, victims of abuse and young people with disabilities; dealing with issues such as drug abuse, psychological and physical abuse, broken families, domestic violence, homelessness, suicide, disabilities, disadvantage, unemployment, low self-esteem, crime, prostitution and imprisonment; and organisations run by young people for young people in a location where such a service is lacking.

The aim of the project is to provide workshop training in a wide range of theatre skills for young people in Broome and surrounding regions. A musical play written by young people, targeting the unemployed, homeless and disadvantaged, and exploring the issues and needs of young people, and which is produced for public and educational workshop performances, provides a voice for young people.

The objectives of the project include:

training young people in specific skills for application to theatre

adding project workshops to school programmes

training young people in performance skills oriented toward public and educational audiences

focus on the needs of young people as a workshop and performance theme

the consolidation of Broome Youth Theatre as a viable, self-sustaining organisation for young people, continuing a programme of works pertinent to young people

communication of the needs of young people to the general community

to enhance sense of self-esteem and capabilities of participants

to target the unemployed, the homeless, the disadvantaged and the disabled for workshops.

Strategies and Methods:

The workshops depend upon a high level of community support. Information about the project has been disseminated through schools, local youth services, government organisations, art and theatre groups and the local media.

Surveys of workshop participants, students involved in school programmes and general public audiences are taken. These are meant to target indicators such as lifestyle changes, awareness of issues and needs, personal responses to workshops, training progress through skill development, employment and team working abilities. Surveys of participant type are meant to provide a breakdown of the social composition of the sessions, and the impact of the workshops on particular groups.

The project is meant to be a model for teenagers to participate in every aspect of the production, staging and performance of the play, as well as the organising committee. The programme covers a diverse range of skill development workshops, including acting, singing, musicianship, puppetry, dance, stage production, stage management, theatre administration, stage direction, musical direction, set design, lighting design, costume and makeup, and sound engineering.

The strengths of the project include:

- use of popular method of communication which draws from all elements of the community and appeals to a broad cross-section of the community
- theatre breaks down many social barriers and communicates on issues pertinent to society and especially to young people, in a safe environment and an acceptable form
- benefit is found in development of general social skills for participants, and transfer of ideas and information to wider community.

The limitations of the project include:

- lack of consistent funding and secure organisational base
- ambitious estimation of employment opportunities arising from participation in project and in the effect of the project on confronting concrete problems of youth.

Outcomes:

The project offers a voice for young people to construct their interpretation of the issues and their need for a public space of their own. By expressing young people's realities and experiences the project offers an important source of skill development and educational information.

3.3 South Australia: Project X [City of Unley]

Rationale and Aims:

This project is a joint initiative between Urban Myth: Theatre for Youth and Unley Council. It received funding from the Australian Youth Foundation under its *Social Belonging Grants Program* as well as funds from the Australia Council and the City of Unley. It is to involve over one hundred young local residents in the development, planning and performance stages of the project.

This project is oriented toward involving young people aged 13 to 25 in participating in outdoor promenade performances which explore the contemporary urban youth experience. The project focuses on the needs of young people who are experiencing significant disadvantage, such as those from non-English speaking backgrounds, the young homeless, the young unemployed and young people with disabilities.

The aim of the project is to produce an energetic contemporary performance experience that recognises a wide range of youth cultural activity—such as rollerblading, raving, hanging out. It is based on the idea of flexible performance activities and sites, with performances ranging from loud and visual to small and secretive. The project is to take place in streets, buildings, parks and car parks in Unley. Audience size will thus be fluid, with performances ranging from the intimate to the spectacular.

The objectives of the project are:

to create a dynamic and exciting youth arts performance that explores a diverse range of contemporary youth arts activity

to explore the potential of promenade and site specific performance

to recognise contemporary youth arts culture as valid art activity

to provide opportunities for young people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to work together on the creation of a performance that celebrates youth culture

to allow young people to set their own agenda in creating performance about issues that face them at a community level

to encourage the participation of young people in all stages of planning and development

to develop greater community awareness of the needs and issues relevant to young people in the Unley area

to develop a list of recommendations, established by young people, which Unley Council can action

to create a best practice model that young people and other councils around Australia may adapt to suit their needs

to facilitate the creation of a local youth network that is active, committed and respectful of ongoing youth needs, and encourages youth participation at all levels.

Methods and Strategies:

The project wished to include young people from a number of different institutional bases. Some of these included a residential house for young people from rural areas who are children of refugees or have parents from non-English speaking backgrounds,

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a youth supported accommodation programme, a residential house and rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities, international students from NESB who are currently experiencing pressure from local residents about their presence in the community, a support group and social drop-in centre for young unemployed people, a group of highly skilled rollerbladers and skate boarders, a youth club for young people from the Greek community, young people associated with Unley Youth Theatre, and local high schools and sporting groups.

Young people could be involved in the project in a wide range of ways. These included: administration; design and script writing; stage and sound techniques; in-line skating and skateboarding; multi-media; dance; film and video making; visual art; drama; and music. Open workshops were held to provide all interested young people with an opportunity to contribute their ideas to the project. To publicise the project, an innovative publicity stunt, the 'Chalk Blitz' was organised, which provided young people an opportunity to 'claim their place' by 'marking their space' with a chalked X.

The performance organised by the project has a number of components:

the project X story concentrates on a group of young people and their journey to discovering the local council, to be performed by an ensemble of young people who have studied performance with Urban Myth

it will be a multi-artform production using a creative team and cast of young people, and involving skating, music, acting, sports-skill, design and poetry it will use film (within the production) as a medium to profile young people in and around the areas of Unley using public space

it will contain elements of loud music (hip-hop, techno, jungle and house rhythm) alongside moments of stillness and silence

it will have several choreographed sequences involving skate boarders, in-liners and possibly young people on bikes

it will 'sample' the voices of young people from the Unley area in a 'vox-pop' style, and these voices and comments will be sound recorded into the score of the project.

The emphasis is on variety, flexibility and relevance. One goal of the project is to give young people themselves a voice, both in terms of direct performance and in terms of the issues which form an integral part of the performance (e.g., unemployment, street level conflict).

The strengths of the project include:

taps into the dynamic nature of youth culture, and young people's uses of public space

inclusive approach which targets disadvantaged young people as well as more mainstream young people

extensive contact with young people in local area, and encouragement to participate in the project as significant players

deals with issues relevant to young people's own experiences in the urban setting.

The limitations of the project include:

- difficulties and differences experienced in the administration of the project in terms of processes, outcome expectations, and accountability, including budgetary concerns
- the level of participation of young people in the project, particularly on the Steering Committee and in the planning process
- lack of clarity in early stages about specific details of the project and performance, and differing expectations of the project benefits for particular agencies.

Outcomes:

The project has evolved over time, and after much negotiation between principal parties regarding outcomes, expectations and substantive content. This highlights the importance of in-depth discussion and ongoing commitments to process issues in any project of this nature.

3.4 Other Relevant Projects

Queensland:
Feral Arts project
[Brisbane]

This project has conducted extensive research on public space issues, including identifying a range of cultural heritage features of the South Bank area in Brisbane and traditional associations for Aboriginal people. It has actively tried to mould appropriate artistic programmes for young people in the light of this research.

Queensland:
sNot Arts project
[Brisbane]

This project has developed a range of activities which aim to involve young people and appropriate community groups in strategies by which diverse groups of young people may interact and contribute positively to the cultural life of the Inala to Ipswich corridor. A key focus for the activities has been issues relating to young people's use of public space.

4. Commercial Site Management

4.1 Western Australia: Midland Gate Shopping Centre [Midland]

One of the first attempts to deal directly with public space and youth issues was at the Midland Gate Shopping Centre in Perth. The management of the Centre was experiencing complaints and problems associated with the large numbers of young people at the shopping centre. There were reports of young people hanging around in groups, vandalism, graffiti, fighting, abuse of shoppers, damage to staff cars and evidence of drug use such as empty syringes and liquid paper bottles in the car park.

More security guards employed by the Centre only increased the conflict experienced with the young people. Young people stated that they were picked on by security guards and said that standing around with their friends was enough to make the guards approach them, ask for their names and often tell them to leave. The Centre manager stated that it became a game of 'cat and mouse' in an 'us and them' situation. Meanwhile, shopping trade increasingly suffered, particularly on Thursday evening and Saturdays.

Management finally approached a local youth organisation, the North East Regional Youth Council,and a committee was established to look into the issue. The committee included representatives from the Centre management, local council, local youth service, state and Commonwealth departments, local businesses, police and community groups. A survey was conducted so as to understand the situation better and to develop a programme that would attempt to address the needs of the young people and the community.

The solution was to hire a part-time youth worker to be employed to work in the Centre, whose position was meant to be funded conjointly by the Centre and the state Family and Community Services. An office was allocated for the worker and a meeting room and resources for making referrals were made available.

The role of the youth worker has been to work with the young people, link them into existing support services where applicable and to make available information on leisure, employment, accommodation, education, health and legal services. The young people help to identify current gaps in services in the community and made recommendations to the Centre about their needs. Some of the young people are employed part-time collecting trolleys, gardening and doing general maintenance.

Since the decision to consult widely on the issues, and to adopt a more developmental and accommodating approach in relating to young people, life at the Centre has improved. Incidences of inappropriate behaviour have been markedly reduced, as have vandalism and violence.

The Centre has saved money by contributing to the wages of the part-time youth worker, in comparison with the costs associated with security guards. Importantly, the Centre management and its youth reference group does not see the role of the youth worker as to 'police' young people or to act as a quasi-security guard. Alternatively, policies have also been developed and training has been conducted for security officers so that they know when to approach young people, when to call the youth worker and when to walk away.

4.2 New South Wales: Rights of Passage Project [Shire of Sutherland]

This project was located at the Westfield Miranda shopping centre. It has been supported by the Sutherland Shire Council, the Australian Youth Foundation, Westfield Miranda and the Eastern Area Service for Youth. The project employed two part-time youth workers.

The concept of 'rights of passage' was used to try to emphasise a co-operative use of public space by Westfield management, shop owners and young people. Young people are seen as legitimate users of public space, rather than as problems which need to be dealt with. The project involves sporting activities such as basketball and skateboarding, hands-on multi-media programmes, a range of arts and drama courses, and adventure sports such as indoor rock climbing. The aim was to explore how privately owned space such as a large regional shopping centre complex could accommodate the needs of young people. Concern was directed at efforts to accentuate the positive contribution and positive place of young people in the shopping centre precincts.

The major achievements of the project include a continuation of existing cash and in-kind support by Westfield for youth programmes; the setting up of a youth consultation committee; recognition of the need for security guards to be trained in how to handle young people using non-confrontational methods; establishment of a consultation committee to authorise and oversee programmes; and access by youth advocates to monthly meetings with retailers.

A number of issues were identified which affected the project's development. For example, the time frame for the project (effectively

10 months) and the fact that the workers were only employed on a part-time basis, only permitted minimal exploration of the 'active' and 'passive' uses of privately-owned space by young people. There were also significant changes in project staff, as well as in the personnel of the three major stakeholders. A combination of staffing changes and time limitations meant that less attention was paid to the needs and attitudes of retailers, with implications for the development of collaborative approaches and a common understanding or language regarding the issues. Concern was also expressed over the clarity of purpose and overall direction of the project. Overall, there is a continuing need for the creation of activities and opportunities for all stakeholders to interact on issues of relevance to them and the project.

4.3 Queensland Hyperdome Street Work Service [Logan City]

Research conducted by Feral Arts in 1993 demonstrated a number of limitations with existing services and venues relating to the Hyperdome in Logan City. One outcome of this research was the identification of the need for a flexible, autonomous street work service in the local area. The management of the Hyperdome agreed to provide a base for the service, which is currently operated by the Open Family agency.

4.4 Western Australia Armadale Shopping Centre Youth Service [Armadale]

Another instance of Centre management support of youth services is the Armadale Shopping Centre in the suburbs of Perth. In this case, the Centre management has provided a free lease for a youth service, Armadale-Gosnells and District Youth Resources Incorporated, to operate from the Centre. The service includes a drop-in centre that offers pool, computer games, and arts and crafts. It also undertakes community service and recreational programmes with young offenders, and works in a number of local schools.

4.5 Victoria
Northland Shopping Centre Behaviour Code [Northcote]

Considerable conflict was occurring between young people and security guards at the Northlands Shopping Centre in Melbourne. A meeting was held at the request of an Aboriginal parent, involving people from the local high school (Northland Secondary College), the Centre security supervisor and other interested parties to discuss the issues.

The outcome of the meeting was further discussions taking place between students and security guards, who together devised a code of behaviour for all parties. This represented a shift away from a police guard approach to that of customer service on the part of the security staff, and an acknowledgement that loud, noisy groups can be intimidating to shoppers, on the part of the students.

In addition to a behaviour code, the Centre management offered performance space for the school Aboriginal dancers, display space for school art work, and retail traineeships for Year 10 students as well as numerous short-term work experience placements. The general atmosphere has improved in the Centre, and the emphasis is on creating opportunities rather than simply reacting to problems.

4.6 Queensland

Canelands Shopping Centre Art Project [Mackay]

This was a project held at the Canelands Shopping Centre in 1996 aimed at improving relations between young people and retailers, security guards, management and older patrons. It involved an artist running workshops out of a vacant store, and youth workers being available to address youth personal issues or conflicts: The ten-week project culminated in a week of performance involving street theatre, a fashion parade and story-telling for children. One outcome of the project was that working in the Centre allowed youth workers to be more accessible to young people, but to do this adequately required an expansion of youth-specific activities and open communication between diverse stakeholders.

5. New Development Projects

5.1 New South Wales: Glebe Re-Development [Glebe]

In 1995 a company, Broadway Australia, submitted an application to develop the former Grace Brothers store site in Glebe, a suburb of Sydney. The intention was to build a complex comprising a supermarket, discount department store, cinema complex, food court, leisure and entertainment centre, and speciality shops.

A local youth worker from Leichhardt Council organised consultations with local youth organisations, and consultations were also held with other sections of the community by the Council's Community Development team and Town Planners. A number of concerns were raised about the development, in terms of planning and service issues, and the social impact of a large facility which would be open until midnight, seven days a week.

Accordingly, the Community Services Department of Council drafted a detailed report recommending a number of community facilities, structures and policies. The 'youth' section was very detailed and the developers responded in the form of a letter of offer to the Council. The developers proved to be very approachable and amenable to all the suggested youth provisions, which were put to them both in terms of the social impact, and also in terms of being able to provide the first truly youth-friendly shopping centre in Sydney.

The Council's final recommendations to the developers concerning young people included:

that a youth advisory committee be formed comprising a Council youth worker, a representative of Leichhardt Youth Network, the Co-ordinator of Glebe Youth Centre and a Youth Liaison officer of Glebe police and the Developer/Centre's Management representatives

that consultation with the youth advisory committee regarding the development be ongoing throughout the design, building and eventual operation of the complex

that a full-time youth services co-ordinator be employed and fully funded by the centre's management at the rate set by the Australian Services Union of New South Wales category 3, year 3-4 plus on-costs, and provided with an office. The youth advisory committee and a representative from Centre's management to interview and select

that an annual youth activities budget of $10,000 (indexed to cost-of-living adjustments) be provided by the Centre's management to fund youth activities developed by the youth services co-ordinator

that a full-time youth worker be employed and fully funded by the Centre's management at a rate set by the Australian Services Union of NSW category 2, year 2–4 plus on-costs. The youth advisory committee and a representative from the Centre's management to interview and select

that a visible youth space (office/meeting room of 50 square metres) be provided on Level 2 near the family entertainment area that a youth policy be developed by the youth advisory committee in consultation with the Centre's management prior to the centre's opening, so that its recommendations could be implemented from the start. The youth policy would advise on how to positively manage the attendance of young people within the complex

that alcohol be sold within the family games facility only in enclosed, strictly defined areas which have a café atmosphere and not that of a bar/hotel

that the family entertainment/interactive games centre provide at least 25 per cent of the centre's area with low cost or no cost activities such as coin machines, also ping pong, pin ball, videos and exhibition spaces and comfortable informal seating for conversations

that a single donation of $100,000 to support youth facilities in the immediate area be provided

that an annual donation of $10,000 (linked to the consumer price index) be provided to support youth facilities and services

that complimentary and concessional passes be available for low income young people from the local area, to access businesses in the complex, comprised of the gym, sports, cinema and entertainment facilities

that the Centre management explore and develop employment training opportunities and traineeships for young people in the complex.

The Council proposal was significant for two particular reasons. First, the issues covered in the proposal tried to respond to the impact of the new development at both the internal level (what happens within the facility) and external level (what happens to the surrounding community). Private commercial interests were thus intertwined with wider public interests well beyond the specific site.

Secondly, the Council's ability to negotiate with the company was enhanced by the fact that, in order for the project to go ahead, the developers had to submit a Development Application to the Council. This allowed the Council to negotiate certain conditions being met. At this stage, as well, the developers were keen for their proposed development plans to be approved and as such, any concerns about the project which are voiced were more likely to be listened to carefully. It is unlikely that the provisions asked for by Council in this instance would be granted by a shopping centre that was already in existence. However, other councils have been successful in obtaining contributions for youth facilities when shopping centres were seeking to expand their existing facilities—a process which also requires a Development Application.

While the developers amended the original Council proposal in various ways, the overall provisions have been accepted. Leichhardt Council staff have followed up these negotiations with an examination of ways to incorporate similar processes, and Social Impact Assessment processes, into key Council documents such as the Town Plan and the Social Plan.

6. Local Council Integrated Planning

6.1 Queensland: Major Centres project [City of Brisbane]

Brisbane City Council received a grant from the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care *Public Space Initiative Fund* to develop guidelines for the design and management of major centres in consideration of the needs of young people using these centres. These include city malls, regional and sub-regional shopping centres. The project aimed to assess the current use of the major centres; identify stakeholder needs and examples of best practice in centre management design which responds to the needs of young people; produce draft principles and guidelines for the planning, development and management of major centres; incorporate amendments to the Town Plan where appropriate in response to the outcomes of the project; and document and publicise the outcomes.

The purposes of the project included the provision of a safer, more welcoming environment for centre users, including young people and their families; enhanced economic and social relevance of major centres for young people; systematic change of planning approvals and public space design to address the needs of young people in major centres; and awareness of young people's needs and behaviour patterns in the management of centres.

This project involved considerable research, documentation and strategic thinking. In February 1997 a preliminary discussion paper was released for comment. The paper included extensive discussion of the relationship between young people and community spaces;

detailed description of the Brisbane City Council Planning System, including strategic and corporate plans through to local area outline plans; consideration of urban design principles for inclusive community space, drawing upon relevant academic literature for models and principles of good practice; review of literature on public space issues, and documentation of various public space project initiatives around the country; and provision of draft principles for planning, and for management.

The draft *Planning & Management Guidelines* document provided a systematic overview of investigation materials and key recommendations across three areas of policy focus. The recommendations encompass discussion of (a) principles, (b) policies, (c) actions, (d) agencies, (e) implementation tools, and (f) proposed innovations. For present purposes a brief indication of principles and policies will be provided.

1) youth and community development policy

Principles:

inclusive public and community spaces

recognising the tension between commercial and community objectives

understanding shopping centres in their local and regional contexts

the active inclusion of young people

responsive and co-ordinated policy development within council

promoting realistic and accurate information on young people to the broader community responding to diversity amongst young people

safety.

Policies:

ensure that spaces meant to fulfil public and community functions are accessible to all members of the community, with specific attention paid to accessibility for the diversity of young people

improve social, recreational, cultural, vocational and commercial opportunities for young people in Brisbane City

foster increased understanding and engagement between young people and other members of the community

diminish health and safety problems experienced by, or related to, young people's use of community spaces

improve the representation and voice of a diversity of young people in Council youth policy and major centres development

input into the provision of social services across centre catchment area

provision of and support for affordable recreation and social options for young people, particularly those in the 12 to 17 years age range.

2) urban management through strategic & local planning and design

Principles:

inclusive community space

affordable opportunities for young people

social impacts on young people

- creation of a sense of place that includes symbolism and design elements appropriate to young people
- respect for the rights, culture and symbols of indigenous young people
- recognition of homeless and displaced people
- satisfaction of the diverse needs and wants of young people from different backgrounds
- responsive and integrated planning
- integration of major shopping centres into the built form, topography and social life of their surrounding communities
- open, safe and accessible planning and design
- consultation, dialogue and community resourcing.

Policies:

i) planning issues

- ensure that public space in central city, regional business, and major district centres is planned to provide ample and accessible meeting places for all age and social groups, including young people
- promote affordable, interesting and diverse recreational, entertainment and commercial activities in central city, regional business, and major district centres
- identify and allocate sites for new youth centres close to public transport nodes in local area plans for central city, regional business, and major district centres, to promote young people's access to social and recreational facilities

integrate transport and physical planning in local area outline plans for the central city, regional business, and major district centres, paying particular attention to the needs of young people for cheap and reliable public transport and bicycle access

enhance the range of goods and services offered to young people in major shopping centres

promote youth friendly and youth specific spaces in major shopping developments in central city, regional business, and major district centres

promote appropriate entertainment facilities for young people in major shopping developments in central city, regional business, and major district centres

promote recreational, social and health opportunities and information for young women in accessible and safe central places

plan and design major shopping centres to recognise and reflect the culture and values of the various social and age groups of their users

adopt targeted consultation and participation methods to ensure that young people's needs are included in plans for new developments in central city, regional business, and major district centres

conduct effective social impact assessment of all significant shopping, commercial and entertainment proposals (in excess of 500 square metres gross floor area) in central city, regional business, and major district centre precincts

include young people's needs and priorities in the planning objectives, policies and standards for the central city, regional business, and major district centres optimise the use of vacant sites in central city, regional business and major district centres for short term recreational, educational and cultural use by young people

integrate principles of safe design into the physical planning of both the public domain and new and re-developed shopping centres in central city, regional business and major district centre precincts

promote the development of small shopping centres to meet local needs

make effective use of all available planning instruments to achieve a 'whole of government' approach to optimal access and provisions for young people in major centres.

ii) design issues

promote physical and visual integration of major shopping centres within their surrounding environments, design arcades as efficient and attractive axes of movement and places to pause, and avoid 'walled city' designs

provide meeting places and informal socialising space for young people and the broader community in major shopping centres

improve design quality of major centres by providing clear required standards of circulation, floor space arrangement, and adequate areas of informal and community space including open air seating and shade

design for public safety

improve amenity and links of rail stations, bus interchanges and bicycle routes

reflect local ethnic, and indigenous, history and culture.

3) operational management and community relations in major centres

Principles:

right of access for young people

positive and inclusive management approach

safety, security and service for all centre users

minimally intrusive security provision

commercial considerations

centre liaison

involvement of young people.

Policies:

ensure that public space in central city, regional business, and major district centres, and community space in major shopping developments is managed so as to be accessible for all age and social groups, including young people

ensure the provision of safety and security measures occurs in a way that maximises the access of all people to community spaces, with particular regard for young people

provide ongoing mechanisms for dialogue, collaboration and negotiation between centre owners and managers, police and security staff, council, other community interests, other levels of government, and young people regarding the management of public and community spaces in major centres and large shopping centres

involve young people in identifying, and developing responses to, their own wants and preferences ensure that there is adequate consideration in management processes of developing and maintaining a range of youth specific and youth friendly spaces and activities which meet the diversity of needs of young people

reduce conflict by ensuring the responsiveness of major centres to all young people including those who are marginalised through limited economic means, homelessness, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, or other life circumstances

promote cultural events and activities which reflect the nature of the surrounding community ensuring young people's cultural interests are included

that each major centre and large shopping centre in its day-to-day management consider how to further develop and sustain as appropriate a range of active and passive recreation options responsive to the expressed needs of young people

develop and maintain a centre environment that is consistent with commercial viability

provide and monitor regular training for security personnel in utilisation of a customer/community service orientation to all social and age groups, and specifically relating to young people in public and community space contexts

respond to difficulties in young people's use of centres in ways which improve relations between young people and centre management and other centre users

adopt in major shopping centres a policy of energetic recruitment and training of local young people from diverse backgrounds

- to improve the perceptions about young people and reduce the fears about young people by other users of major centres
- create and maintain a regular dialogue with the liquor licensing division and its district authorities.

For each of the three broad areas described above, there are detailed strategy outlines which provide indications of how each policy objective might be attained. The report as a whole provides the most comprehensive analysis and series of prescriptions on young people and public space issues in Australia.

6.2 New South Wales: Hurstville Town Centre project [City of Hurstville]

Hurstville is a major regional business and retail centre in Sydney. It is characterised by the development of a large shopping complex in the town centre and by its role as a transport hub. In 1993, the Council engaged planners to consult with young people and other sectors of the community over concerns about young people's use of the town centre. A number of issues were raised, including the lack of youth venues for those with limited financial resources, the lack of social space outside the shopping centre (itself a major focus point for young people), and the way that external open space did not allow for the 'spill-over' from retail facilities. The lack of opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach by all stake-holder was also noted.

A number of recommendations were made. Some of these included that the Council undertake the development of an integrated Town Centre Strategy that links the social and cultural amenity of the town centre to its economic development; that a Town Centre Committee be established, including representation from young people to identify and act upon issues relating to the social and cultural amenity of the town centre, particularly in relation to young people; that the Council support the employment of a youth and town centre co-ordinator based in the town centre precinct; that the Council support the development of a co-ordinated youth programme; and that the Council allocate funds towards the provision of a multi-purpose youth facility in the town centre precinct.

The major objective of the recommendations was to establish a regional approach to meeting the needs of young people in St.George and the integration of these needs with those of the general community. The key response to the recommendations was the establishment of a community-based committee which involves police, service clubs, the three St.George councils, business community, youth services and young people. The Committee, first called the Hurstville Town Centre Committee, then the Focus on St.George Committee, provides a forum for discussion and development of strategies to address community issues, improve local amenities, better integrate young people into the Town Centre, seek funding for a multi-purpose youth facility, and develop revitalisation strategies which incorporate young people and the general community into urban design and programming initiatives. Fundamentally, the role of the Committee is that of developing strategies based upon principles of integrated local area planning.

6.3 New South Wales Draft Youth Social Plan [Leichhardt Municipal Council]

In 1995 Leichhardt Council adopted a recommendation that a youth policy be developed to promote the interests of young people and to incorporate youth facilities in major developments. The draft youth policy which was prepared for discussion and comment begins by asserting the basic rights of young people to enjoy the same fundamental freedoms as adults and to be accepted as part of the wider community. It then provides a series of prescriptions for possible inclusion in the youth policy, followed by detailed discussion of recommendations for strategic action by Council over the period 1997 to 1999. The document builds upon work already undertaken by the Council in relation to the Glebe re-development project (see 5.1 above).

For present purposes it is sufficient to note the main policy statements. These include:

- **a stronger focus on area planning and local service co-ordination** (e.g., to include support of existing and new projects; partnerships with other agencies as part of a holistic approach to meeting youth needs; promotion of information and training sessions for practitioners working with young people)
- **providing a more equitable distribution of youth services and facilities throughout the municipality** (e.g., re-allocation of existing resources according to need; provide services which outreach to local young people, particularly disadvantaged young people)
- **youth consultation, participation and advocacy** (e.g., on youth-specific and community issues; involvement in design,

planning, management of all policies, services, public spaces and facilities)

recreation and public space provisions for young people (e.g.,to access space,to develop social skills,to engage in non-commercial activities)

providing youth facilities in commercial developments (e.g., incorporate youth needs into development and planning processes)

active recreational spaces (increase level of recreation areas and entertainment venues; develop policies for public entertainment including legal dance parties)

public space design and inclusion of artwork (e.g.,strong visible design aesthetic appropriate to user group; participatory planning in partnership with communities; employ young artists as part of artistic teams)

health and well being (e.g., supporting and improving community-based youth health services and initiatives; implementation of harm minimisation strategies)

youth and family support services (e.g., assist local services to cater to the diverse needs of all young people and their families; specialised needs of particularly disadvantaged young people; specific cultural and language needs of young people and their families)

education, training and employment (e.g.,try to provide a wide range of work experience opportunities to local students; support to local services which give priority to early school leavers and those young people most disadvantaged in the job market; support and where possible develop job creation opportunities)

housing and homelessness (e.g.,support local youth accommodation and housing services; provision of free health and support services for young homeless people)

crime prevention (e.g.,to work with young people not against them; where no crime is being committed, to protect the right of young people to freely associate in public space).

The draft policy document provides a useful illustration of an attempt to develop a comprehensive, holistic approach to youth and community issues. It also demonstrates in concrete fashion how a local council might respond to both immediate local issues (e.g., conflicts over public space) and issues of national significance (e.g, unemployment, poverty, inequality).

7. State-Wide Initiatives

7.1 Queensland Resource Manual [Local Government Association of Queensland]

In 1997 the publication *Bikes, Bands and Strategic Plans* was released. The resource manual covers a wide range of topics, ideas and strategies relating to young people and the business of local government. It suggests that young people should be directly part of the core business of local government, with involvement in planning, policy and participation.

1. Planning

Considering young people's needs in Council planning processes such as land use, planning, strategic planning, and recreation planning.

The planning arenas in local government in which young people could be affected or involved include:

- urban design (e.g., community safety issues)
- development assessment (e.g., consultation of different users)
- local area planning (e.g., bikeways)
- issue-based planning (e.g., youth council in-put into Council)
- community facilities planning (e.g., meeting places such as community centres)
- human services planning (e.g., integrated planning including youth services)
- corporate planning (e.g., vision for young people as well)

- strategic land use planning (e.g., demographics relating to number & proportions of young people)
- council policy development (e.g., youth services relative to youth needs)
- regional planning (e.g., catchment areas and relationships with neighbouring councils)
- input into State and Commonwealth policies and programmes (e.g., employment advocacy).

2. Policy

Formalising and clarifying council's involvement with young people in the community, and roles and responsibilities in youth affairs.

The kinds of policies which can address the needs of young people include:

- corporate plan (i.e., sets out general vision and policy directions of council)
- social policy, social plan, community services plan (i.e., specific social & community focus of local council activity)
- council youth policy (i.e., specific policies developed in relation to young people)
- addressing youth issues as part of another policy (i.e., policies in corporate plan relating to indigenous people).

A suggested policy development cycle is put forward. The steps of the cycle include:

1. consider the context
2. preparation
3. develop a plan
4. identify stakeholders
5. identify issues
6. develop options
7. write up the policy
8. implement
9. review

These steps are intended to cover areas such as rationale for policy, projected impacts, key issues, strategies and evaluation. A policy document could be structured around the following types of headings:

aims and objectives
definitions
principles or values
key issues
roles and responsibilities
plan for implementation

3. Participation

Encouraging young people's participation in council's decision-making processes and in community life generally, including to be consulted in matters that affect them.

In designing a consultation process, a number of steps are suggested. These include:

1. clarify the purpose
2. identify who will be involved
3. determine resource requirements
4. plan the process
5. establish the time frame
6. implement and monitor
7. feedback and evaluate

A checklist of things to think about when designing a consultation or participation process with young people is provided. It includes the following:

real influence (i.e., clarity about real level of power and influence that young people can have)

information (i.e., properly brief young people about issues and options)

practical support (e.g., provide access to transport, secretarial support, accommodation and catering, venues with access for people with disabilities)

personal support (e.g., making young people comfortable through clear expectations, public recognition, planning achievable goals)

skills training (e.g., understanding local government, meeting procedures, communication, decision-making)

recognition (e.g., acknowledgement of involvement and in-put of young people)

real outcomes (e.g., tangible results such as a budget, project control) interesting processes (e.g., use of arts, small group discussion, interesting venues)

real representation (e.g., broad range of young people from diverse social backgrounds).

On the specific issue of public space, the resource manual outlines how to plan a strategy. The steps in the planning cycle include:

1. identification of needs and resources
2. development of aims and objectives
3. formulation of strategies
4. implementation
5. evaluation

In developing strategies, it is suggested that councils need to identify the role they wish to play. The types of roles include:

co-ordination (e.g., efficient allocation of resources, bringing groups together)

facilitation (e.g., information, advocacy, 'in kind' support)

service delivery (e.g., cultural and arts workshops for young people)

planning (e.g., development assessments)

policy development (e.g., policy responses to specific issues)

participation (e.g., inclusion of young people in all processes)

facility provision (e.g., community infrastructure such as skateboard ramps)

information provision (e.g., youth newsletter).

It is also suggested that a planning matrix could be devised to facilitate the involvement of a range of council departments or work areas in the planning process. For example, in addressing vandalism and graffiti it would be important to include staff who cover works, lighting, parks, community services, recreation and arts, and planning. A planning matrix might take the form of a table, as illustrated in the accompanying figure.

The development of this kind of practical, informative resource manual provides clear guidelines and directions for local councils in incorporating youth needs, youth concerns and young people directly into the business of local government.

Local Council Work and Action Planning Matrix

	Council Areas of Work					
Action Plan	parks	planning	community	services	recreation	etc.
potential strategy (ies)						
role of council in strategy						
potential financial cost						
need for links with other departments						
participation by young people						
possible difficulties in implementation						
likely outcome						
benefits to the council, community & young people						

Source: Upham, 1997.

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7.2 New South Wales Consultation Processes [Department of Local Government]

A survey was distributed to all local councils in New South Wales by the Department of Local Government concerning the mechanisms they use to consult with young people and the effectiveness of these mechanisms. On the basis of consultation findings and a review of relevant literature, the report on youth consultations provides a checklist for effective youth consultation–participation. The checklist was devised according to different stages of the consultation–participation process.

1) preparing for consultation–participation

- commitment from council to genuine youth consultation–participation in the sense of seeking the views of young people in relation to matters which affect them and incorporating these views into council decisions (e.g., adoption of youth-specific policy and plan; establishment of youth councils with control of particular projects, allocation of budget and access to council staff for advice)
- consultation–participation starts early in the decision-making process (e.g., before decisions have already in effect been made)
- young people are provided with genuine opportunities to participate (e.g., not tokenistic, commitment to taking views of young people into account in decision-making process)
- young people are involved in planning consultation–participation (e.g., encourage disadvantaged groups of young people, especially indigenous, non-English speaking and young people with disabilities, to participate, set agendas, get feedback and evaluate)

parents/families are informed about the consultation (e.g., general information through local newspapers and council newsletters, letter to parents of participants providing information about consultation)

a range of young people are involved in consultation–participation (e.g., in terms of social backgrounds, institutional ties such as schools and youth services, and youth councils; different groups may need to be consulted separately, as with young people from NESB, young people in rural and remote areas)

the consultation is promoted using a range of strategies appropriate for young people (e.g., notices at youth centres and schools, word of mouth, community leaders and workers, ethnic press and radio)

young people are provided with training (e.g., on role and responsibilities of local government, council decision-making processes, social or cultural action training, research skills, group processes)

young people are provided with opportunities to develop skills (e.g., facilitating meetings, writing submissions and letters, dealing with the media, project development and implementation, public speaking, negotiation and teamwork)

young people are provided with opportunities to be consulted on a range of issues (e.g., development of council's Management Plan)

a combination of consultation mechanisms is used (e.g., forums, questionnaires, workshops)

young people are provided with all relevant information in a way which is balanced and easy to understand (e.g., through guest speakers, site inspections, discussion papers, audio-visual presentation, photographs, translations into appropriate community languages, large print and braille, access to hearing loops)

councillors are encouraged to attend the consultation

the consultation is held at a time appropriate for young people (e.g., different times for different groups of young people, such as students, unemployed young people and young workers)

sufficient time is allowed for the consultation (e.g., time to absorb information, opportunities for further consultation, relatively short for some participants who may have difficulty in maintaining concentration)

the consultation is held at a venue which is easily accessible and where young people feel comfortable (e.g., youth centre, close to public transport, accessible to young people with disabilities)

there is provision for participants to receive emotional and practical support (e.g., especially when sensitive issues are likely to be discussed, in case of young refugees, child care for young parents)

adequate funding and staff resources are allocated to support consultation–participation (e.g., for advertising, printing written information, translation, hire of venue, refreshments, transport, child care, interpreters, provision of feedback, evaluation).

2) conducting the consultation–participation

the consultation has a clear purpose and this is conveyed to participants (e.g., includes extent to which it can influence decision-making process, realistic expectations)

young people set the agenda as much as possible (e.g., negotiation with young people at all stages and opportunity to add to agenda, time for all items to be covered)

young people are involved in facilitating the consultation (e.g., as facilitators or co-facilitators with adults, specific groups which are consulted separately such as indigenous young people or young women to facilitate their own consultations)

there is an emphasis on informality rather than formal meeting procedures (e.g., have meeting procedures, but develop these in conjunction with young people)

young people's views are respected and valued (e.g., avoid making judgmental statements, accurately present views in feedback to participants and reports to council)

opportunities are provided for young people to have fun, be creative and be challenged (e.g., use of role plays, drawing, photography, different tasks, provide training, interesting venues, short-term and longer-term projects and involvement)

opportunities are provided for young people to work in small groups (e.g., for small groups, 6–10 participants is ideal, for larger groups maximum size of 100 recommended; break larger group into smaller groups, and assign different tasks)

information and views provided by young people are documented (e.g., use of nominated recorders, displayed on butcher's paper)

- the consultation ends with a summing up of the issues discussed, formulation of recommendations if appropriate, and information about what happens next
- youth councils to set achievable goals, to record achievements however small, and to maintain links with other young people in the community (e.g., develop annual workplan, minutes of meetings, regular contact with other young people).

3) after the consultation–participation

- the contribution of young people is recognised (e.g., through articles in local newspapers, provision of a certificate and payment of young people)
- young people are provided with feedback (e.g., short summary reports, access to full report, how findings used in making decisions)
- the consultation process and its outcomes are evaluated (e.g., obtaining views of participants about what they thought of the process and suggestions for improvements)
- improvements in future consultations based on findings from the evaluation are identified, documented and are easily accessible to staff involved in organising consultation–participation.

The Department of Local Government is currently undertaking a project which aims to develop and implement integrated whole-of-council models for three rural councils for involving young people in council decision-making, meeting young people's needs for the use of public space and addressing local youth crime and anti-social issues. It is also developing a crime prevention resource manual for local councils which, while not youth-specific, does have relevance to issues of young people and public space.

8. National Initiatives

8.1 The Australian Youth Foundation (AYF) Social Interaction Strategy

In 1993 the Australian Youth Foundation (AYF) undertook consultations with over 700 young people to identify the issues young people viewed as important. The results of those extensive consultations intensified the Foundation's concerns about the isolation of young people from their local communities. During the consultations hundreds of participants recounted their experiences of being ignored. They complained of being denied access to community facilities or being moved on from public spaces. The Foundation discovered that many young people felt 'invisible'. In short, they did not belong.

Responding to these findings, the AYF launched a national initiative designed to stimulate pro-active projects at a local level. During January 1996 the AYF's *Social Belonging Grants Program* attracted nearly 140 expressions of interest from around the country. The selection process was rigorous and was carried out by a selection panel comprising experts from diverse backgrounds. Selection panel members included John Pritchard (Australian Local Government Association), Nicole Robins (Leichhardt Council) , AYF Board Members Deidre Tedmanson, Julian Punch, Jennifer Nicholls and David Eldridge and Dr Robert White (University of Melbourne).

The AYF committed funding to twelve Social Belonging projects which represented a diversity of approaches to the same issue (most of these projects feature in this publication). Eight of these specifically addressed the programme's priorities; three had a strong cultural focus and one addressed discrimination against sexual minority youth.

In particular, the projects addressed a range of issues identified during the programme's selection process:

- Youth consultation and participation in town planning processes
- Services for young people within shopping centres and malls.
- Audits to assess and improve the accessibility of spaces and facilities for young people.
- Particular concerns affecting young women in using public space
- Use of public spaces by young people from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Multi-purpose public facilities
- High quality and commercially viable alternatives to licensed premises
- Direct youth input into the development of new public spaces
- Transport and improved access in rural and remote locations
- Outreach services enhancing young people's access to and use of public space.

All projects were assessed to form a picture of current national trends regarding services and facilities for young people and each funded project committed to undertake evaluation and provide project documentation to contribute to the national resource of 'good practice' which would be of direct benefit to community projects around the country.

The programme marked a significant collaboration between diverse community sectors. It received co-funding from sources including the federal government, the business sector, local government, community organisations and other funding bodies. These funds, combined with those provided by the Foundation, have meant that more than $880,000 has been allocated to projects of national significance.

The increased profile and ongoing debate over issues related to social belonging put into stark relief the need for a community guide to help address the identified problems. This groundswell resulted in the production of the community guide *Negotiating Youth Specific Public Space: A Guide for Youth and Community Workers, Town Planners and Local Councils* by Rob White, Gwenn Murray and Nicole Robins. Published by the NSW Department of Training and Education Coordination and distributed by the AYF, the Guide proved to be very popular and resulted in new projects focussed on public-space appearing around the country. The support of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) in promoting the publication, meant that the message of the Guide was far-reaching and effective in being a catalyst for positive change.

The AYF's social interaction strategy has served to highlight and fund innovative solutions to national issues. Evidence of the increasing profile and significance of the issue of public space can be seen in the choice of theme for the Youth '98 Symposium—a regular conference hosted by the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, and in this instance co-hosted with the Youth Research Centre of the University of Melbourne, focussing on major issues which impact on the lives of young people. The theme of the symposium was *Public Spaces, Public Voices* and the conference saw project managers and young people from around the country gather together to share and learn.

As part of the four day symposium, the AYF conducted working meetings and seminars to showcase models developed by ten projects funded under the *Social Belonging Program*. The sessions devoted specifically to the AYF's Social Belonging Program incorporated overviews of the program, reports from specific AYF projects, and forum/small group discussions around the themes—'lessons learned' and 'where to from here'. The support of the Australian Youth Foundation for the present Guide is part of this on-going process of identifying issues, evaluating programmes and developing strategies to ensure that young people continue to feel that they too 'belong'.

8.2 National Campaign Against Violence and Crime (NCAVAC)
Young People and Crime Prevention

The National Campaign Against Violence and Crime (NCAVAC) is a Commonwealth Government initiative aimed at finding and promoting ways of preventing crime and fear of crime in Australian communities.

It does this by:

- supporting and funding research
- mapping existing strategies and programmes
- promoting and communicating examples of 'good practice' to diverse audiences
- enabling the training of people in sectors involved in crime prevention
- co-ordinating initiatives and information as appropriate.

The broad approach of NCAVAC is to encourage the use of a wide range of methods in crime prevention, to keep members of the public well informed of the main issues surrounding crime and the fear of crime, to encourage partnerships and extensive participation at the local level in making communities safer, and to monitor and evaluate existing crime prevention practices with a view to establishing and highlighting 'good practice' methods, skills and strategies.

NCAVAC has been involved in a number of projects that relate specifically to young people. In its overall approach to young people and crime prevention, NCAVAC has recognised that young people are victims as well as offenders. Most notably, disadvantaged young people are more likely to offend and be more at risk of victimisation.

Accordingly, NCAVAC sees crime prevention primarily in terms of social development and positive intervention programmes.

Publications and projects relating specifically to young people include:

- negotiating young people's use of public space
- preventing crime and violence at public events
- preventing domestic violence by working with adolescents
- working with homeless youth to prevent offending and victimisation
- early intervention and developmental approaches to crime prevention
- attitudes of young people towards domestic violence.

Most of these projects have been carried out in partnership with the National Anti-Crime Strategy (NACS), an initiative of the state and territory governments. All national project reports and research are produced and distributed free upon request.

8.3 National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) Legal Resources and Case Work

The National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) is the only community legal centre in Australia that specialises in the advocacy of children and young people's rights and interests.

Established in 1993 with funding from the Australian Youth Foundation, the NCYLC is supported by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, the University of Sydney and University of New South Wales Law Schools and funded by the Federal Attorney General's Department and a variety of other sources. The Centre has produced a wide range of discussion papers and research reports, made numerous submissions to governments around the country in relation to law reform proposals, and established a quarterly newsletter, *Rights Now!*, which currently has around 850 subscribers both within Australia and overseas.

The Centre has been active in the area of public space issues through their two rounds of nation-wide consultations which were undertaken during 1994 and 1995. These consultations revealed concerns of young people in relation to public space issues. The NCYLC's *Rights into Reality* tour (1994) identified a common concern among young people in all states and territories, that they were 'getting a raw deal in the community':

> Shopping centre managers, town councils and planners were criticised for not paying enough attention to the needs of young people and not wanting them to congregate in public spaces... Deep concern was expressed at the growing use of electronic surveillance of public spaces and constant hassling of young people who congregated in town centres and other central locations.

The Centre has developed a strong casework profile, not only in New South Wales, but also in other states and territories. It continues to undertake selected test cases with the aim of improving the law in areas of wider significance to children and young people's rights.

It is the firm belief of the NCYLC that, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and young people have the right to participate actively in decision-making processes which affect them, and therefore particular emphasis should be placed on 'negotiating' the use of public space between young people and other members of the community.

Publications of the NCYLC include:

Rights Now! Newsletter;

Discussion Papers

Police Questioning of Young People

Why Australia Needs a Commissioner for Children

A Justice Strategy for Children and Young People

Rights Into Reality: Report on National Consultations

Youthism: Age Discrimination and Young People

Promoting Youth Participation

Research Reports

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Submission on Australia's Compliance

Youth Advocacy and Court Support

School Exclusions: Student Perspectives on the Process

Know Your Rights at School—NSW, ACT, VIC, QLD, SA, WA

In April 1997, the NCYLC launched Australia's first and only legal information web site for children and young people, *lawstuff*:

`http://www.lawstuff.org.au`

The site has already proven to be extremely popular, and with plans for further expansion, *lawstuff* looks likely to remain at the forefront of developments in the electronic delivery of legal information to young Australians.

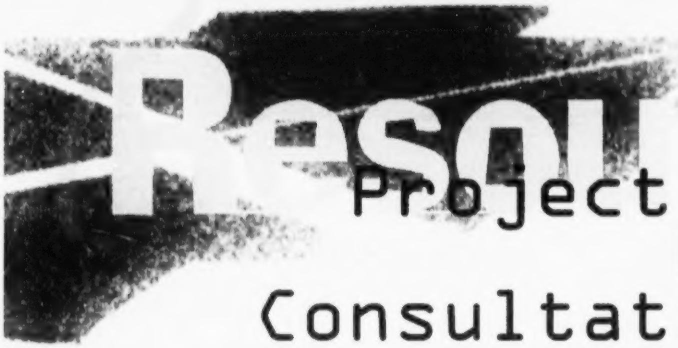
Conclusion

This Guide has provided an overview of contemporary youth public space projects which have taken place or are currently underway in many parts of Australia. The projects vary greatly in terms of funding sources, basic aims and objectives, budgets and resources, timelines, accountability and decision-making structures, methods and strategies, and strengths and limitations.

In total, however, they illustrate the creativity and commitment of many thousands of people in trying to deal with complex social and environmental issues. Together they provide a myriad of examples of how public space issues can be approached in different community settings.

Broad principles and guidelines relating to these projects have also been discussed. The developments described in this Guide provide concrete illustrations of specific strategies and measures which might be adopted in dealing with youth–public space issues. The importance of consultation, of respecting young people, and of incorporating youth concerns into management, planning and design of public spaces is paramount. So too are research, collaboration and evaluation in devising and developing alternative ways of negotiating young people's use of public space.

Finally, it needs to be reinforced that creating positive public spaces for young people is a process. As such, it must be recognised that there is no single, or simple, solution to the issues covered in this publication. The process is ongoing, and requires long-term commitment of resources, staff and facilities. In many cases, successful projects and initiatives present a challenge to prevailing practices and ideas about the nature of public space, and the nature of social regulation. For young people and their communities, however, they can open new doors to positive life experiences and the building of better social relationships.



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List of Contacts

The Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Phone (02) 6281 1211
Web www.alga.com.au

The Australian Youth Foundation
Suite 302 /134 William Street
EAST SYDNEY NSW 2011
Phone (02) 9357 2344
Fax (02) 9358 5635
Email youth@ayf.org.au
Web www.ayf.org.au

National Campaign Against Violence and Crime Unit
Attorney General's Department
Robert Garran Offices
National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600
Phone (02) 6250 6711
Fax (02) 6273 0913
Web www.ncavac.gov.au

National Children's and Youth Law Centre
c/- The University of New South Wales
SYDNEY NSW 2052
Phone (02) 9398 7488
Fax (02) 9398 7416
Email ncylc@unsw.edu.au

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